Latin Historiography and Poetry in the Early Empire

GENERIC INTERACTIONS

Edited by
JOHN F. MILLER & A.J. WOODMAN

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Latin Historiography and Poetry in the Early Empire

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PREFACE

The papers published in this volume were delivered at a conference entitled '*Proxima Poetis*: Latin Historiography and Poetry in the Early Empire' which was held at the University of Virginia on 11–12 April 2008. This gathering was intended as the sequel to an earlier conference held at the University of Durham in 1999 and entitled 'Clio and the Poets: Augustan Poetry and the Traditions of Ancient Historiography'; the papers of that conference, edited by D.S. Levene and D.P. Nelis, were published under the same title by Brill in 2002.

We are grateful to all those who came to Charlottesville to attend our conference, and especially to our panel of speakers and to those who chaired the various sessions (Edward Courtney, Stephen Harrison, Charles McNelis and Vassiliki Panoussi). Richard Williams provided expert advice on advance publicity, Ted Lendon gave invaluable assistance during the conference itself, and magnificent hospitality was dispensed by Jenny Strauss Clay, Jane Crawford and Bernie Frischer. The conference was sponsored by the Department of Classics at the University of Virginia and could not have taken place without the help of Cyndy Kelly, Glenda Notman, and our graduate students. We gratefully acknowledge the very generous support we received from the Dean of Arts and Sciences, the Corcoran Department of History, the Ancient History Fund, the Carl H. and Martha S. Linder Center for Art History, and the Special Lectures Committee.

Charlottesville
John F. Miller, A.J. Woodman
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INTRODUCTION

John F. Miller & A.J. Woodman

When Quintilian made his well known remark that historiography is "very close to the poets" (10.1.31 *proxima poetis*), he was explaining (*enim*) why many of its virtues are not suitable for imitation by an orator. Historiography itself is in some way "a prose poem," he says, and is written for the purposes of narrative rather than of proof ("quodam modo carmen solutum est, et scribitur ad narrandum, non ad probandum"). Indeed Cato, Sallust, Livy and Tacitus all began their works with a hexameter rhythm, and the so-called 'heroic clausula', of which Quintilian disapproved (9.4.74), is a feature of historical narrative. Conversely many poets were preoccupied with historical themes similar to those treated by historians and we even find some poets writing in a recognisably 'historical' manner. The contributors to *Clio and the Poets* (2002) provided ample evidence that Augustan poetry in particular was heavily influenced by the traditions of ancient historiography; the contributors to the present volume were invited to investigate more widely the influence of the one genre on the other in the century after Augustus' death.

The closeness of historiography and epic poetry is notably conspicuous in their focus on leaders interacting with crowds. Hardie in his chapter explores the dynamic between generals and unruly crowds in the inaugural sequences of Tacitus' *Annals* and *Histories*, against the background of equivalent scenes in Greek and Roman epics. *Annals* 1 expansively features the military mutinies of AD 14 in Pannonia and Germany, which afford Tacitus the opportunity to reflect upon issues of leadership in the state as well as in the army. Germanicus contrasts sharply with Tiberius. The psychology of the seditious army implicitly figures the potentially unruly Roman people as a whole during the Principate. The topoi of crowd behavior found in Tacitus and elsewhere are introduced to Graeco-Roman literature in *Iliad* 2 with Agamemnon's testing of the army which induces a disorder restrained by Odysseus; the episode also serves as prototype for the great man's ability to control a crowd. The opening sequence of Virgil's *Aeneid* raises the issue on the natural and divine levels in the storm-winds let loose by the disobedient Aeolus, which Neptune calms in pointed comparison with a states-

man quelling a seditious crowd. Homeric and Virgilian motifs inform the crowds in Book 1 of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, seen responding to Caesar in both military and civilian contexts. Crowd reaction and action likewise contextualize the moves of Galba and Otho in the first book of Tacitus' *Histories*, where at one point stunned spectators evoking the audience at the Circus seem to allude to the first crowd scene in Roman epic, the expectant people as Romulus and Remus vied for leadership in taking the auspices.

Another important concern shared by ancient epic and historiography is causation. The keen interest of Greek historians like Herodotus and Thucydides in origins and beginnings is often traced back to Homer. Gibson discusses the opposite phenomenon in post-Augustan epic, namely, how various modes of causation in the Latin poets echo the practices of historiography while simultaneously reflecting the epic tradition. In the historical epics of Lucan and Silius, the poets' insistence on expounding the causes of the war at the start observes both historiographical and epic precedents. Likewise, in the mythological epics of Valerius Flaccus and Statius (as well as in Silius' *Punica*), the prominent role of rumors as causes of subsequent events mirrors that in histories and epics both. The poets engage both explicitly and implicitly with the processes of moral decline claimed by historians to mark major changes. On the scale of individual action, Lucan's use (and avoidance) of direct speech seems to comment wryly on historiography's usual practice of plotting events with speeches.

History and epic memorably collide in Seneca's *Apocolocyntosis*. Damon discusses from several vantage points how poetry there deforms historiography for the fitting purpose of satirizing the deification of an emperor—Claudius—who styled himself a historian. Poetic and historiographical personae aggressively compete at the outset of the narrative; later, too, semantic doublets comically aim to say the same thing in poetry and prose. The historical form meanwhile self-destructs by using poetic content reminiscent of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which one of the gods at the council explicitly (and, of course, ridiculously) cites as the official record to which Claudius' deification should be added (9.5). Seneca more broadly views historiography as suspect for treating base or false material. In this case, his parody of historical writing mocks Claudius' literary pretensions, while official sources are ridiculed, in part by repeating their dubious claims about Claudius' death and its immediate aftermath. The "generic squabble" underscores that no single voice is appropriate to describing the absurd subject at hand.

Three chapters center on Statius. Lovatt investigates "Livian moments" in the *Thebaid*, instances where evident allusion to, or similarity with, sections of Livy's history can provide insight into the narrative workings and the Roman meaning of Statius' epic. Reading Tydeus' grizzly mutilation of Melanippus (*Theb.* 8.757–762) in the light of a Roman warrior's comparable ferocity at Livy 22.51.9 (triangulated with Sil. *Pun.* 6.41–54) throws into relief Statius' sympathy for Tydeus (vs. Livy's neutrality) and the consequences of the epic's divine internal audience (vs. the general on a hill in Livy). Likewise, the cosmic destruction and chaos seen in the earthquake that climaxes *Theb.* 7 can be said to literalize the implicit metaphorical extension of the earthquake at the battle of Trasimene in Livy's account. To recall the intervention of Coriolanus' mother (Livy, Book 2) when reading Jocasta's embassy in *Theb.* 7 suggests an optimistic path not taken, while the *devotio* of P. Decius Mus from Livy 8.9.9–12 makes us wonder to what extent the Statian Menoeceus' self-sacrifice is an empty spectacle and also invites reflection on tragic modes of presentation in epic and historiography.

Hulls explores Statius' commemoration of Domitian's seventeenth consulship in *Silvae* 4.1. The poetic book begins with the inaugural state ritual of AD 95, the installation of the consuls, whose names traditionally mark the year in official records and annalistic histories. That Statius withholds mention of the emperor's consular colleague for 95 is but one move towards reorienting all time in Domitianic terms. The *cognomen* used here, Germanicus, is the new designation for the month of September. The planetary cycle is renewed with this year, as is the *saeculum*. Through his mouthpiece, the god Janus—whose speaking role on the day's first year is borrowed from Ovid's *Fasti*—Statius announces that the emperor transcends the annalistic structures of history, in effect replacing history. At the same time, the poet expresses his own keen ambition for the *Silvae* to replace other forms of historical discourse, including both historiography and epic.

Elsewhere in the *Silvae*, Statius' self-identity becomes implicated in a totally different sort of contemporary event, the catastrophic eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in AD 79 adjacent to his home town of Naples. Statius treats this natural calamity in his two poetic epistles (3.5 and 4.4), as would Pliny the Younger after him in his two letters to Tacitus about his uncle's death. Newlands argues that in each case the epistolary form enables the author to refocus the cataclysmic natural horror through a consoling intimacy of exchange and an aesthetics of decorum. The usual approach of historians is to magnify, dramatize, and vividly describe natural disasters.

Pliny, too, modulates to a heightened style in recounting the eruption but the personal address and authorial focus of the letter allow him to scale down the catastrophe to human dimensions. For Statius Vesuvius offers occasion to reflect optimistically on his native region's subsequent ability to regenerate, culturally as well as economically, and on his own poetic renewal after finishing the *Thebaid*.

We associate the notion of *metus hostilis* above all with Sallust, who traced the turning point in Rome's history to the destruction of Carthage in 146 BC: once Rome no longer had a foreign enemy to contend with, decline set in which would eventually lead to the civil wars of Sallust's own day. This concept was so important in Sallust's historiography that no subsequent historian could ignore it, even if he chose to modify it. Jacobs shows how the same is true of Silius Italicus, who in his epic transposed the concept from the Third Punic War to the Second, the subject of Silius' epic, paradoxically selecting the Roman defeat at Cannae in 216 as the turning point. By expanding and compressing the relevant parts of his story, Silius makes Cannae the central event and transforms it into the *peripeteia* of the entirety of Roman history. Across a series of three separate passages (3.557–629, 7.409–493, 9.340–353) Silius links the removal of *metus hostilis* with the transition from *bellum externum* to *bellum civile* in AD 68–69. The fall of Saguntum in 218 is seen as a replay of the fall of Troy and a foreshadowing of the imminent fall of Rome. Though Rome does not fall to Hannibal, his defeat of the Romans at Cannae ensures that the Romans have the determination to win at Zama, and this victory in turn signals the eventual end for Carthage and hence the removal of the *metus hostilis* which had kept Rome strong.

The civil wars of AD 68–69 are the subject of Tacitus' *Histories*, and, while most of the narrative describes Roman fighting Roman, Ash focuses upon an episode, unique to Tacitus, in which the province of Moesia was invaded by a neighbouring Sarmatian tribe, the Rhoxolani (*Hist.* 1.79). The ensuing battle is short-lived, since the Rhoxolani, weighed down by their chain mail and at a particular disadvantage in the snowy conditions, were slaughtered "velut vincti," an image previously found in Livy (28.2.9). Ash suggests, however, that Tacitus may also have had in mind a passage from Virgil's *Georgics* (3.367–375) where the poet describes how animals are hunted in the frozen wastes of Scythia, a region which adjoins that of the Rhoxolani: in each passage the hunted are buried in snow and unable to move, while the hunters approach them without danger and despatch them with ease. On one level Tacitus' text provides an example of the kind of battle narrative which we know was

found entertaining by Roman readers of history; but, if the Rhoxolani are being seen in terms of Virgil's stricken animals, it follows that the victorious Romans are being seen as the successful Scythians. The confrontation has its darker side and indeed foreshadows a later and more serious incursion by the Dacians, for whom the Roman civil war constitutes the removal of their own *metus hostilis*. And, though the Dacians too are driven back (*Hist.* 3.46.2–3), these successive episodes indicate that in the broader scheme of things the Danube will replace the Rhine as the primary area of Roman military activity in the future.

The Dacian attack is preceded by the Flavian defeat of the Vitellian forces outside Cremona and the sack of the city (*Hist.* 3.26–34). Tacitus' account contains the clearest allusions to the *Aeneid*, and, although all of them are well known, Joseph argues that they have not been adequately interpreted. The Flavian attack on the Vitellian camp involves the forming of a *testudo* (3.27.2–3) and is reminiscent of the attack on the Trojan camp, which also involves a *testudo*, at *Aeneid* 9.507–518, a passage to which Lucan too alludes in his account of Caesar's siege of Massilia (3.474–484). The engagements in *Aeneid* 9 are in general presented as a repetition of those at Troy in *Aeneid* 2 (e.g. 9.145 ~ 2.624), a book to which Tacitus proceeds to allude a little later (2.364–369, 624–625); and, just as Lucan's allusions repeat those in *Aeneid* 9, so Tacitus' allusions instantiate the repetitiousness of civil war. This is confirmed by one final allusion. At 3.33.2 Tacitus will briefly see the sacking of Cremona in terms of Virgil's description of the Underworld in *Aeneid* 6 (269); but his earlier description of the new obstacles that will confront the Flavians when they enter the city (3.30.1 *ac rursus <u>nova laborum facies</u>*) alludes to Aeneas' response to the Sibyl's warnings in that same book (6.103–104 *non ulla <u>laborum</u>, | o virgo, <u>nova</u> mi <u>facies</u> inopinave surgit*). The words *ac rursus* not only constitute a metatextual signal that Tacitus is alluding to Virgil but also underline the very repetitiveness which the allusions—and the narrated events—symbolise.

One of the authors contemporary with Tacitus was Juvenal, and, though it is usually impossible to determine which (if either) was influencing the other, the persona of the satirist clearly shares features with a historian whose major historical works are characterised above all by their criticism and innuendo. This relationship is particularly in evidence when the two authors coincide in describing the same individuals and events, as Williams and Nappa both show. The three-times consul Vibius Crispus receives a good press from Quintilian and others but is treated quite differently by Tacitus in his *Histories* (2.10, 4.41–43) and by Juvenal

in his celebrated fourth satire (4.81–93). The historian is concerned with the man's activities as a *delator*, Juvenal with his role as an *amicus Caesaris* in Domitian's *consilium*. The public space required for the former is complemented by the privacy inherent in the latter, and, whereas Crispus finds it easy to speak out when he attacks his victims in the senate, he is unable to voice anything but sycophancy in front of Domitian. The fear in which the imperial *amicus* is forced to operate is, as it were, the converse of the terror which he himself is able to inflict upon others. It is the exemplary function of each of their works which leads Juvenal and Tacitus to focus on one aspect or the other, as Crispus illustrates both the power and limitations of speech under an emperor.

Likewise exemplary is the treatment of Gaius Silius and Messalina, whose relationship is introduced by Tacitus at *Ann.* 11.12 and then continued at 11.26 until the end of Book 11: it is their bizarre wedding, described as beyond belief (*fabulosum*) by Tacitus (11.27), which attracted the particular attention of Juvenal in his tenth satire (10.329–345). Tacitus uses the term *facilitas* of both Claudius and Messalina, as if to suggest that the one was no better than the other, while he also seems critical of Silius. Juvenal, on the other hand, treats Silius more sympathetically as a victim. Nappa argues that both authors treat Claudius as a muddled and ignorant cuckold and Messalina as one of the powerful women by whom the first century AD is dominated and who presented such a danger for elite men. Whether there was a political dimension to the affair of Silius and Messalina, however, or even whether events took place as Tacitus describes, are unknown.

A lack of knowledge has also characterised the relationship between Tacitus' *Annals* and the *Octavia*, with current scholarship equally divided between those who believe that the historian was influenced by the anonymous dramatist, or even modelled his account on the play, and those who deny such relationships or postulate some common source. Taylor begins his discussion by looking at the murder of Agrippina in both texts and in particular at the victim's last words in each (*Ann.* 14.8.5 ~ *Oct.* 371). Scholars have seen a similarity here between the *Octavia* and certain of Seneca's tragedies: if Tacitus has been influenced by the *Octavia* to describe Agrippina's last moment in 'Senecan' terms, that has relevance for Tacitus' general portrayal of Seneca in the *Annals*, where he is consistently described as responsible for the words which Nero utters. Thus, for example, the characters of Seneca and Nero in the play both seem to allude to the *De Clementia* of the 'real' Seneca: it is as if the *Annals* records what the *Octavia* enacts. Few would dispute that the dialogue

between Nero and Seneca in the *Annals* is dramatic (14.53–56), but one reason may be that a confrontation between the two had already been dramatised in the *Octavia*.

If the case is ultimately incapable of definitive proof, we should not allow modern preconceptions to blind us to the possibility that Tacitus was indebted to a poetic text. The similar responses of Tacitus and Juvenal to first-century persons and events are testimony to a similarity of interest; and, while we might expect an epic poet of the Punic Wars to be influenced by the political thinking of Sallust, there are sufficient Tacitean allusions to Virgil to suggest that the influence is by no means one-way. Historiography is, after all, "very close to the poets."

CHAPTER ONE

CROWDS AND LEADERS IN IMPERIAL HISTORIOGRAPHY AND IN EPIC

Philip Hardie

Epic is the genre of outstanding individuals, heroes in competition with each other to be the best. At the same time the existence of a Homeric kind of hero (as opposed, say, to a loner like Herakles) has no meaning outside the social group to which he belongs, for whose survival and wellbeing he has a responsibility, and on whose loyalty and cooperation he is largely dependent for the successful prosecution of his aims. It is particularly in a situation of war that the relationship between a hero and the larger group becomes unavoidable, as the actions of the heroic chiefs or kings take place within the massed movements of advance, engagement, withdrawal, or flight of armies that they command: it is to the *Iliad* rather than the *Odyssey* that we will look for descriptions of collective behaviour.[1]

Ancient historians similarly tend to focus on outstanding individuals, exemplary either of virtue or vice, but also offer the reader memorable pictures of crowd behaviour: Thucydides, Livy, and Tacitus are all notable in this respect. In keeping with ancient historiography's emphasis on the behaviour and psychology of individuals, crowds are indeed often treated as if they were individuals.[2] Virginia Hunter, in one of the few studies of the crowd in historiography, points out that Thucydides analyses the psychology, not the sociology, of crowds.[3] The older modern classics of crowd psychology lend themselves particularly well

[1] The Homeric *agore* offers less striking examples of the interaction between outstanding individuals and the crowd: the major exception is the *agore* in *Iliad* 2, on which see below.

[2] See Harrison (1988) 3–4 on Le Bon's and Canetti's concept of the crowd: "fascinated by the single most striking characteristic of crowds: that when tens, hundreds, thousands of individuals join together, their individualities appear to be lost, subsumed, transformed into one discrete, homogeneous body … The susceptibility of a crowd to characterisation as a single, describable, individual is one of the means by which those who commentate upon crowds attempt to make sense of them."

[3] Hunter (1986).

to the ancient historian's treatment of crowds—Gustave Le Bon's seminal, if reactionary, *La Psychologie des foules* (1895), and Elias Canetti's *Crowds and Power* (Engl. translation 1962). Canetti's list of "Crowd symbols" overlaps largely with standard images of the crowd in ancient texts: fire, sea, rivers, wind, etc. Tacitus more than most ancient historians, as Rhiannon Ash well points out in her study of armies and leaders in Tacitus, is interested in differentiations of motivation and behaviour within a collective identity,[4] but Tacitus also often defaults to images of the many-headed beast, allowing the sixteenth-century Florentine historian Scipione Ammirato to sum up Tacitus' views on the crowd thus: "concludamus, vulgus monstrum esse horrendum ingens, cui lumen ademptum, leve, ignavum, timidum, praeceps, rerum novarum cupidum, ingratum, et in summa absque ullo virtutum commercio vitiorum mixturam" ("In conclusion, the mob is a horrifying, enormous monster, deprived of light, fickle, cowardly, fearful, headstrong, greedy for revolution, ungrateful, in sum a mixture of vices without any share of virtues").[5]

This chapter looks at inaugural episodes or sequences of episodes in historiography and epic which explore the relationship between leaders and unruly crowds. I begin and end with Tacitus. Here my approach is at once broader than that of Ash, in that I include the *Annals* as well as the *Histories*, and at the same time narrower, both in that I do not attend in detail to the nuancing of the characterization of the crowd, and in that I focus on those inaugural episodes that are programmatic for the importance in Tacitean imperial narrative of the relationship between the *unus homo* and those whom he must command or control if he is to establish and maintain monarchical power.[6] The lasting institution of the principate with the accession of Tiberius is marked by the lengthy narratives of the Pannonian and German mutinies in *Annals* 1. Inaugural crowd scenes in historiography have parallels in epic, beginning with the remarkable passage at the beginning of *Iliad* 2 in which king Agamemnon is in danger of completely losing control of the Greek army. That passage is an important model for the transposition to the mythological level of the theme of sedition in the first book of the foundational

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[4] Ash (1999b).

[5] Ammirato (1618) 729, summing up a chapter "De moribus, & natura vulgi"; cited by Seiler (1936). Ammirato presents the mob as if it were a single monster like Virgil's Polyphemus (*Aen.* 3.658).

[6] On the theme of the *unus homo* in Livy's Republican narratives, and its relevance for the political conditions of Livy's own day, see Kraus (1994) index s.v. "one and only"; Santoro L'hoir (1990) 230–241.

Latin imperial epic, the *Aeneid*. Lucan, drawing on both epic and historiographical models, explores the relationship between crowd and leader in his narrative of the inexorable advance of Julius Caesar towards monarchical power, once he has crossed the Rubicon in Book 1 of the *Bellum Civile*. After Lucan I return to Tacitus and the narrative in *Histories* 1 of the messy attempts to reestablish stable control of the principate after the collapse of Julio-Claudian power with the death of Nero; I conclude with a parallelism between a Tacitean description of the Roman people watching a struggle for control of the throne and an inaugural moment from Ennius' epic poem on the history of Rome.

Epic, which traditionally tells of monarchs and their peoples, has an obvious relevance for a writer of imperial history, although crowds and leaders, in both civic and military contexts, play a not insignificant part in earlier historians. For example, Virginia Hunter sums up her discussion of mass psychology in Thucydides thus: "social control is the countervailing force of a single individual who understands crowd psychology and who has the rhetorical skill to make practical use of that understanding."[7] However "single individuals" take on an especial importance when the Republic turns into the Principate.

Inaugural seditio *in* Annals *1.16–52*

The first major block of narrative in Tacitus' *Annals*, taking up nearly half of the first book, tells of the Pannonian (chs. 16–30) and German (chs. 31–52) mutinies of AD 14. Various explanations have been proposed for the length devoted to events which cannot in themselves have been exceptionally important. Goodyear, following Wilhelm Kroll, suggests that it was because the mutinies provided Tacitus "with ideal material for development in a graphic and dramatic manner."[8] But a purely artistic motive is unlikely to satisfy. Christopher Pelling points to a theme of central importance for the principate: the mutinies "illuminate the crucial role an army can play in making or breaking a *princeps*," a theme which "would clearly have recurred ring-fashion in the closing books, where the power of the legions will at last be shatteringly unleashed."[9] Pelling also sees in the second and longer narrative, of the German mutiny, an

[7] Hunter (1986) 25.
[8] Goodyear (1972) 195; Kroll (1924) 37 speaks of "effektvoller Ausgestaltung."
[9] Pelling (1993) 69, referring to Syme (1958) 375.

opportunity for Tacitus to comment on the difference between the worlds of the Republic and the Principate, through the contrast between Germanicus, old-fashioned in "his style of fighting, leadership and politics," and the "devious and complex … subtle and unsavory" world and atmosphere of the Tiberian principate.[10] Germanicus is not just an old-style general, however, he is a senior member of the imperial family, and a potential claimant to the throne, at least in the eyes of his legions (1.31.1): *Isdem ferme diebus isdem causis Germanicae legiones turbatae, quanto plures tanto violentius, et magna spe fore ut Germanicus Caesar imperium alterius pati nequiret daretque se legionibus vi sua cuncta tracturis* ("during the course of almost the same days, and from the same causes, the German legions were disrupted—all the more violently, given their greater numbers, and with high hopes that Germanicus Caesar would be unable to suffer the commands of another and would entrust himself to the legions, who would carry everything with them by their own force").[11] In his relations with the troops Germanicus is not untainted by the direct relationship between imperial power and the support of the Roman masses that is a recurrent theme of Tacitus in both the *Annals* and the *Histories*, and a theme which emerges clearly in the role played by Germanicus' infant son (and hence potential successor, had Germanicus supplanted Tiberius as emperor): *Ann.* 1.41.2 *iam infans in castris genitus, in contubernio legionum eductus, quem militari vocabulo Caligulam appellabant, quia plerumque ad concilianda vulgi studia eo tegmine pedum induebatur* ("already there was an infant begotten in the camp and brought up in the legions' billet, whom in soldierly designation they called 'Caligula,' because he was often dressed with that covering [*caliga* 'soldier's boot'] on his feet to win the affection of the crowd").

Tony Woodman very ingeniously points to the parallelism between the commands of the brothers Drusus and Germanicus in AD 14 and of the brothers Tiberius and Drusus in 12–9 BC, again engineering a strong contrast, in this case between the expansive imperialism recorded in the

[10] Pelling (1993) 67–68.

[11] Transl. A.J. Woodman, adapted. Cf. 1.33.2 *quippe Drusi magna apud populum Romanum memoria, credebaturque, si rerum potitus foret, libertatem redditurus; unde in Germanicum favor et spes eadem*; *Ann.* 1.7.6 *causa praecipua* [for Tiberius' reluctance to speak in the Senate] *ex formidine ne Germanicus, in cuius manu tot legiones, immensa sociorum auxilia, mirus apud populum favor, habere imperium quam expectare mallet.* Pagán (2005) in a discussion of the theme of Germanicus as *capax imperii* also points to the language of 1.28.4 '*quo usque filium imperatoris obsidebimus? … denique pro Neronibus et Drusis imperium populi Romani capessent?*'

last book of Livy (*AVC* 142) and the mutinous discord at the start of the *Annals*.[12] The implicit *comparatio deterior* with the reign of Augustus signals to the reader that the reign of Tiberius does not open with a bright new dawn. This reading needs to be qualified by the conclusion of the German mutiny, when Germanicus capitalizes on the troops' desire to expiate their *furor* by putting themselves in the front line against the German enemy (*Ann.* 1.50–51): the fury of internal strife is turned against an external enemy, bringing Germanicus *bellica gloria* (1.52.1, to Tiberius' disquiet), as if in answer to Lucan's complaint at the beginning of the *Bellum Civile* (1.8–23) that the Romans should have deferred violence against themselves until they had completed their programme of world-conquest.[13]

In contrast to these discussions, my focus is on the relationship between the one man with supreme power in a military theatre and the mass of soldiers whom he tries successfully or unsuccessfully to control. This focus on the crowd is found in Hans Seiler's analysis of the episode in *Die Masse bei Tacitus*.[14] Seiler sees the contrast between Germanicus and Tiberius not as one between an old-style Republican leader and the devious and suspicious *princeps*, but between two types of leader in their relationship to the masses: Germanicus is the strong leader who knows how to handle the masses, a *Führer*, no less, while the vacillating and envious Tiberius is the type of the tyrant.[15] Seiler's focus on the masses, and on the very close connections between the great man's actions and the mood of the people,[16] may make a modern reader uneasy, but it at least has the useful effect of reminding us that crowd reaction to the good and ill fortunes of Germanicus is a recurrent and prominent feature of the longer contrastive narrative of Germanicus and Tiberius, which extends as far as *Annals* 3.19.

Victoria Pagán in a recent discussion of the Pannonian mutiny also highlights in a useful way the dynamics of the emotions and words of the

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[12] Woodman (2006) 308–311, 324.

[13] I have not seen Gabba (1975) or Giua (1976).

[14] A reference I owe to Yavetz (1969). Note the date of publication, 1936!

[15] Seiler (1936) 88. Seiler refers explicitly to the model of Hitler at 86: "Wer etwa an der weiblichen Rolle der Masse, des Volkes, in diesem Drama Anstoß nehmen wollte, der sei an die Worte des Führers erinnert," with reference to *Mein Kampf* 44 on the broad mass's womanly love for a strong leader. Seiler also refers to J.W. Süvern, *Über den Kunstcharakter des Tacitus* (Abhandl. d. preuß. Akademie, 1823), which I have not been able to see.

[16] Seiler (1936) 88: "die engste Beziehungen zwischen dem Handeln der Großen und der Stimmung des Volkes."

crowd.[17] The narratives of both the Pannonian and the German mutinies contain good examples of Tacitus' analysis of crowd psychology, of the strengthening or weakening of the many-headed beast in proportion to the degree of unity or disunity of feelings among the troops. The historian presents himself as a diagnostician of the collective military mind. Rumour and fiction are potent, with a set-piece account of the growth and extinction of the effect on the soldiery of Vibulenus' false story of his brother's death (*Ann.* 1.22). Standard crowd imagery of fire and contagious disease is skillfully applied. The whole sequence is inaugurated with the manipulation of the troops by a soldier, Percennius, who has learned his skills in the theatre, that central space for the political interaction between individual and crowd in the Principate (1.16.3 *dux olim theatralium operum*, "once the leader of a theatre claque"). The sequence ends with the image of an unprecedentedly horrific kind of civil war (1.49.1): *Diversa omnium quae umquam accidere civilium armorum facies* ("it was a different scene from that of all the civil wars which have ever taken place"), a kind of almost intra-familial violence between men who share sleeping quarters and dining table. Germanicus says that the slaughter is not a remedy but a disaster, but it has had the effect of purging the military body politic of its dissident elements, and the soldiers' desire to make expiation unites them in effective military action against the foreign enemy under the strong leadership of Germanicus. The pattern of the discord of paroxysmic civil war leading to concord under a single ruler is not unfamiliar.

Pagán, like O'Gorman,[18] also draws attention to the lack of a hard and fast distinction between the behaviour of the Tacitean military and civilian crowds, a permeability perhaps helped by the fact that *seditio* (like στάσις in Greek) is the Latin word for both military mutiny and civil discord. Within *Annals* 1 there is apparently a sharp division between affairs at home and abroad in AD 14, as Goodyear notes: "In the way in which he begins his account of the mutinies at 1.16.1 (*hic rerum*

[17] Pagán (2005), concluding that the Pannonian revolt has an inaugural function of another kind from that for which I argue, being used by Tacitus "as an opportunity to question the nature of power and the morality of dissent, two themes that follow the *Annals* to the bitter end."

[18] O'Gorman (2000) 25: "... although these chapters appear to be clearly demarcated from the surrounding narrative, the elements of chaos, disorder and potential civil war which emerge in the mutiny episodes are discernibly present in the German campaign and back at Rome [1–15, 72–81]." O'Gorman notes that the theatrical disorder at the end of *Ann.* 1 is reminiscent of the mutinies: we remember Percennius.

urbanarum status erat, cum ...) T. seems explicitly to separate them from events in Rome ... artistic convenience may have got the better of historical truth, since it is at least a real possibility that uncertainty over the outcome of the mutinies prolonged Tiberius' doubts and hesitations over the succession."[19] There is also a pointed contrast between the dangerously potent voicings of the crowd, i.e. the legions, in Pannonia and Germany, and the impotent mutterings, *inanis rumor*, of the crowd, i.e. the *populus*, in Rome: *Ann.* 1.15.1 *Tum primum e campo comitia ad patres translata sunt* ... *neque populus ademptum ius questus est nisi inani rumore* ("It was then that elections were first transferred from the Campus Martius to the senators ... The people for their part did not complain at being deprived of their prerogative, except in hollow rumour"). Yet I suggest that the narratives of the mutinies are not just about the power of commanders in the field to control their armies, but that they also serve as a kind of laboratory in which to air issues that touch on the relationship between the emperor and the potentially unruly Roman people as a whole.

In his speech to the mutineers (*Ann.* 1.42–43) Germanicus appeals to the precedents of Julius Caesar and Augustus in controlling seditious legions: 1.42.3 *divus Iulius seditionem exercitus verbo uno compescuit, Quirites vocando qui sacramentum eius detrectabant: divus Augustus vultu et aspectu Actiacas legiones exterruit* ("Divine Julius suppressed an army mutiny with a single word, in calling 'Quirites' [i.e. 'civilians'] those who were rejecting his oath; Divine Augustus by his look and appearance caused terror in the Actian legions"). Germanicus' success in quelling this mutiny shows him to be of imperial material, living up to the *exempla* of his (adoptive) ancestors. As one of his pieces of evidence for his claim that Tacitus' Germanicus is a figure from the past, Pelling mentions how his speech to the troops alludes to Scipio's address to the mutineers at Sucro (Livy 28.24–29, introduced at 24.5 as *civilis alius furor*), part of a larger pattern of Scipio-*imitatio* on the part of the Tacitean Germanicus and his historian.[20] "How appropriate that Rome's most romantic general,

[19] Goodyear (1972) 195, on *Ann.* 1.16–52.

[20] With *Ann.* 1.42.2 *quod nomen huic coetui dabo? militesne appellem, qui filium imperatoris vestri vallo et armis circumsedistis? an cives, quibus tam proiecta senatus auctoritas? hostium quoque ius et sacra legationis et fas gentium rupistis* cf. Livy 28.27.3–4 *quos ne quo nomine quidem appellare debeam scio. cives? qui a patria vestra descistis. an milites? qui imperium auspiciumque abnuistis, sacramenti religionem rupistis. hostes? corpora, ora, vestitum, habitum civium adgnosco: facta, dicta, consilia, animos hostium video*. Germanicus' imitation of Scipio is explicit at *Ann.* 2.59.1, when in Egypt he goes

as described in its most colorful and nostalgic historian, should serve as Germanicus' model." Yes, but Scipio himself is not a straightforwardly Republican hero, and arguably his imperious suppression of the *seditio* at Sucro is a foreshadowing of the irresistible power of Caesar and Augustus to quell *seditio*. Scipio thus emerges as an archetype for the *unus homo* able to calm the storms of sedition.[21]

A serious illness had led to rumours that Scipio had died, which exacerbated the mutiny. Scipio asks the troops if they really believed that the existence of the Roman state depends on his own survival (28.28.11–12):

> quid? si ego morerer, mecum exspiratura res publica, mecum casurum imperium populi Romani erat? ne istuc Iuppiter optimus maximus sirit, urbem auspicato dis auctoribus in aeternum conditam huic fragili et mortali corpori aequalem esse. Flaminio, Paullo, Graccho, Postumio Albino, M. Marcello, T. Quinctio Crispino, Cn. Fuluio, Scipionibus meis, tot tam praeclaris imperatoribus uno bello absumptis superstes est populus Romanus, eritque mille aliis nunc ferro nunc morbo morientibus: meo unius funere elata esset res publica?
>
> What then? If I had been dying, would the country have expired without me, or the power of Rome have fallen when I fell? God forbid that a city founded, with the blessing of all that is divine, to endure for ever should be supposed the equal of this frail and mortal body! Remember the many great commanders who have died in this war—Flaminius, Paullus, Gracchus, Postumius Albinus, Marcus Marcellus, Titus Quinctius Crispinus, Gnaeus Fulvius, the Scipios of my own family—yet the Roman people survive though a thousand others die by sickness or the sword. If I alone were buried, would Rome have been carried out to her grave?
>
> (transl. de Sélincourt)

The belief (or the denial of the belief) that an individual's life is coterminous with that of the state is what might be labelled an imperial topos, first found in Cicero talking about Julius Caesar,[22] and used by Tiberius as one of the topics of consolation with which he attempts to dampen

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unescorted, wearing sandals and Greek dress, *Scipionis aemulatione* (in Sicily). At *Ann.* 2.81–82 the reactions to the reports of Germanicus' death and supposed recovery allude to the similar rumours about Scipio at Livy 28.24.

[21] For an argument that in Silius Italicus' *Punica* Scipio is an ideal prefiguration of a *princeps* see Marks (2005).

[22] Cic. *Marc.* 22 *nam quis est omnium tam ignarus rerum, tam rudis in re publica, tam nihil umquam nec de sua nec de communi salute cogitans, qui non intellegat tua salute contineri suam, et ex unius tua vita pendere omnium? equidem de te dies noctisque (ut debeo) cogitans, casus dumtaxat humanos et incertos eventus valetudinis et naturae communis fragilitatem extimesco; doleoque, cum res publica immortalis esse debeat, eam*

down popular indignation at the meagre funeral of Germanicus, with the *sententia* (*Ann.* 3.6.3) *principes mortales, rem publicam aeternam esse* ("emperors are mortal, the state is immortal"), in answer to the cry of the people at Germanicus' funeral that, with Germanicus, the state had died (3.4.1 *concidisse rem publicam*).[23]

Scipio's demonstration of his control of the army by his speech to the mutineers at New Carthage after the subsidence of *seditio* can be seen as a proto-imperial moment. The emphatic allusion in Germanicus' speech (1.42.2) to that of Scipio immediately precedes his overt appeal to the examples of Caesar and Augustus, so inserting Scipio as the first in a sequence of three extraordinary individuals who exceeded the limits set to power within the structures of Republican Rome.

Homer and Virgil

Tacitus uses the Pannonian and German mutinies as an opportunity to dramatize the relationship between leaders and crowds, with implications that go beyond the immediate military context. The relationship between an *unus homo* and the multitude has an especial importance in a history of the principate, and the surprisingly lengthy narrative of the two mutinies accordingly has an inaugural, programmatic function within the *Annals*. I turn now to epic, starting at the beginning with Homer. The first book of the *Iliad* tells of interactions between heroes, between heroes and gods, and between gods. The crowd is seen only as the army, passive victims of the plague, and then as the passive audience in the *agore* for the verbal exchanges of the kings (53–54):[24]

> Ἐννῆμαρ μὲν ἀνὰ στρατὸν ᾤχετο κῆλα θεοῖο,
> τῇ δεκάτῃ δ' ἀγορὴν δὲ καλέσσατο λαὸν Ἀχιλλεύς.
>
> For nine days the arrows of the god went through the army; on the tenth Achilles summoned the people to an assembly.

in unius mortalis anima consistere; *Att.* 9.10.3 *hunc* [sc. *Caesarem*] ... *mortalem esse* ..., *urbem autem et populum nostrum servandum ad immortalitatem.*

[23] See Woodman and Martin (1996) on *Ann.* 3.4.1 *concidisse*, which "suggests that Germanicus had personified the state in the same way as did an emperor ... Hence the popular cry when it was falsely reported that Germanicus had not died after all (Suet. *Cal.* 6.1 *salva Roma, salva patria, salvus est Germanicus*);" and on 3.6.3.

[24] See Haubold (2000) 48–52 on the people (*laoi*) and the plague in *Iliad* 1; 52–61 on the Testing of the Army; 60: "In the first two books of the *Iliad*, Agamemnon's traditional role as a leader of the people is exposed to merciless narrative scrutiny."

Book 2 by contrast turns the spotlight on the relationship between the crowd and its rulers, as collective disorder is provoked by the seemingly artificial device of the testing of the army by the supreme leader Agamemnon, when he tells them that they cannot take Troy and should flee to their homeland. The king induces a kind of rout (φεύγειν 74, 140, 159), or mutiny, in the army, which is then restrained by the single-handed efforts of Odysseus. Once order has been restored, the book ends with the *Iliad*'s greatest pageant of massed order, the Catalogue of Ships. The movements of the army occupy a symbolic space midway between the civilian and the military: the Achaeans are called to the *agore* as if to arm, an arming scene in the chief space and occasion for the political management of the people, and it is from the *agore* that they flee as if routed in battle. In the sequence as a whole many of the later topoi of crowd behaviour are present:

- The numberless multitude, compared in the first extended simile of the poem to swarms of bees (2.87–90).
- The power of rumour in shaping their behaviour. ὄσσα 'rumour', labelled 'the messenger of Zeus', blazes out and urges them to assemble in the *agore* (2.93–94). Here, paradoxically from the point of view of later narratives of crowd behaviour, the fiction (that Zeus has ordered the return to Greece) is a deliberate ploy on the part of the leader, rather than a distortion of the masses, *qui credunt, sed non fingunt rumorem*.
- The description of the massed voice of the crowd, ἀϋτή, and the difficulty of restraining it.
- The flight to the ships has the appearance of a panic (often associated with rumour in accounts of crowd behaviour), but here of a paradoxical kind, since it is encouraged by the One Man, and is undertaken in a spirit of joy rather than fear.
- The use of the imagery of storm (the similes at 2.144–149) and of fire (ὄσσα 'blazes out' δεδήει).
- The restraint of a 'mutiny' by an *unus homo*, Odysseus.

One might go so far as to see in the Iliadic Testing of the Army a template for all subsequent scenes of *seditio*, and a prototype for episodes that test the power of a leader to control the crowd.

In the *Aeneid* the scene of *seditio* moves to the very beginning of the narrative in the first book. The word *seditio* itself occurs in the statesman simile, the first simile of the poem, applied to Neptune calming the storm (1.148–150):

ac veluti magno in populo cum saepe coorta est
seditio saevitque animis ignobile vulgus
iamque faces et saxa volant, furor arma ministrat.

And just as when sedition has often arisen in a great people and the lowly mob's spirits rage, and now torches and stones fly through the air, as fury supplies them with weapons.

This retrospectively defines the whole of the storm as a kind of *seditio* in the natural world. In Virgil it is the supreme female deity Juno who misleads a king, Aeolus, into the improper deployment of an army, the winds. This army attacks, rather than fleeing (it will be Neptune who puts them to flight, of a kind that will see them rehoused in their barracks, the cave of Aeolus, where they can no longer create havoc: 137 *maturate fugam*). But the attack itself is a kind of mutiny on the part of Aeolus, who has been inveigled by Juno into disobedience to his and the winds' proper master, Jupiter. Virgil elides the distinction between unruly crowds in the military and civilian spheres: the winds are initially presented in a strange kind of polity, prisoners of Aeolus but in some sense his subjects whom he rules as king, according to a constitution (62 *foedere certo*); the horse-managing imagery in *frenat* (54) and *habenas* (63) comes from a standard Latin stock of political imagery. When set free by Aeolus, the civilian crowd turns into a military crowd. We revert to the civilian context in the statesman simile, where the crowd is now the *magnus populus*, the *ignobile vulgus*. The successful king—or emperor—needs to be able to manage both civilian and military crowds, potent to control *seditio* in both the people and the army.

Another duality emerges from a consideration of the sources for the statesman simile. We are told that *seditio* is something that breaks out *saepe*, but, since commentators suggest as a specific *exemplum* an occasion on which Cato the Younger calmed an angry mob, there is a good Republican precedent: Cato fits well the description of *pietate gravem ac meritis ... virum* ("the man who carries weight through his piety and by his services"). Stephen Harrison reminds us of another model, Hesiod's description in the *Theogony* of the honey-tongued king to whom the people look, and who by his sure-footed words can quell even great strife (87 καὶ μέγα νεῖκος). Harrison comments: "It seems a neat and Vergilian irony that this poetical passage associated with kingship is combined as source for the first simile of the *Aeneid* with an anecdote of the Republican Cato."[25] Irony, or the deliberate elision of the difference between Republic and Principate?

25 Harrison (1988) 58.

Lucan

In Lucan's *Bellum Civile* the crowd, and the relation of the *unus homo* to the crowd, assumes a still greater importance.[26] It has often been noted that the first sentence of the poem presents as the main actors not an individual hero or heroes, but a *populus potens* ("powerful people"), *cognatae acies* ("battle-lines related by blood"), engaged on a *commune nefas* ("shared crime"): clashing crowds whose contest hyperbolically involves the greatest crowd imaginable, *totae vires orbis* ("the forces of the whole world"). The poet immediately goes on to apostrophise the collective "heroes" of this epic, *quis furor, o cives ...?* ("What madness, citizens ...?")—the Roman citizens viewed as an uncontrolled crowd—, but, unlike Neptune in the Virgilian storm, the poet will not be heeded. The narrative of Book 1 is largely concerned with the relationship between Caesar, headed on a path towards monarchy, and the community of Roman citizens, whether in their military or civilian capacity. In his demonic course to absolute power Caesar will sweep out of the way his competitor Pompey, whose shadowy greatness is measured by his relationship to the people (1.131–133): *famaeque petitor | multa dare in volgus, totus popularibus auris | inpelli plausuque sui gaudere theatri* ("courting fame and lavish to the common people, he was swayed entirely by the breath of popularity and delighted in the applause that hailed him in his own theatre," transl. J.D. Duff). But now the great tree is dead, propped up by a crowd of lesser trees (142): *tot circum silvae* (is that another way of saying the *vulgus*?).

The poem's first and only encounter between an individual human actor and a divinity is between Caesar and Roma, the embodiment of the collective of the Roman people, a crowd personified as an individual, but powerless to divert the course of her own citizens when led by Caesar (190–192): '*quo tenditis ultra? | quo fertis mea signa, viri? si iure venitis, | si cives, huc usque licet*' ("Whither are you headed further? And whither

[26] Johnson (1987) has good discussions of "the dialectics of master and crowd" (p. 114): see his index s.v. "Crowds"; p. 112 n. 10 "With Lucan the crowd enters literature in earnest as a major character." Johnson refers to Berthold (1975), who discusses the relationship of the poem's three protagonists to the masses (296), and the tension between the chief actor and the masses in the mutinies (297–298). Borgo (1976) traces a shared interest in crowd psychology in Tacitus and Lucan, with the difference that Tacitus, she claims, is uniformly negative in his depictions of the crowd, whereas Lucan often presents it as mature and responsible in its attitudes. On the role of crowds and armies in Lucan see now Gall (2005).

do you bear my standards, warriors? If you come as law-abiding citizens, here must you stop")—echoing the poet's own *quis furor, o cives?*.[27] The impotence of Roma is the sign of the irremediable division within her own person, the split personality that spells civil war, and an anticipation of Caesar's total appropriation to himself of the Roman state in Book 3 (108 *omnia Caesar erat*).

Caesar and the military crowd

The first—and perhaps only real—obstacle to Caesar's progress comes in the form not of an artificially fostered mutiny (as in *Iliad* 2), nor of a figurative mutiny (as in *Aeneid* 1), but of a real mutiny that almost takes place.[28] Caesar first appears in the guise of the Virgilian statesman, able to control the unruly crowd with a mere glance and gesture of his right hand (*BC* 1.297–298): *utque satis trepidum turba coeunte tumultum | composuit voltu dextraque silentia iussit* ("When his look had quieted the bustle and confusion of the assembling troops, and his right hand had commanded silence …"). But in response to his speech the troops murmur and mutter like the restive winds of Aeolus (352–353): *dixerat; at dubium non claro murmure volgus | secum incerta fremit* ("Thus he spoke; but the men wavered and muttered doubtfully under their breath with no certain sound"). They are only brought on side by the speech of the centurion Laelius (386–391):

> his cunctae simul adsensere cohortes
> elatasque alte, quaecumque ad bella vocaret,
> promisere manus. it tantus ad aethera clamor
> quantus, piniferae Boreas cum Thracius Ossae
> rupibus incubuit, curvato robore pressae
> fit sonus aut rursus redeuntis in aethera silvae.

> To this speech all the cohorts together signified their assent, raising their hands on high and promising their aid in any war to which Caesar summoned them. Their shout rose to heaven: as loud as, when the Thracian North wind bears down upon the cliffs of pine-clad Ossa, the forest roars as the trees are bent towards earth, or again as they rebound into the sky.

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[27] On the implication of his army of Roman citizens, as well as of Caesar himself, in guilt in this episode see Gall (2005) 97–99.

[28] See Fantham (1985) 123–126 on parallels between the scene at Ariminum and the mutiny at Placentia in *BC* 5. The *contio* at Ariminum (123) is "based ultimately on Caesar's speech to the thirteenth legion at Ravenna in *Bellum civile* 1.7. Lucan has concealed the fact that different legions are involved."

The comparison of the soldiers' sky-reaching shout to storm-winds echoes the winds similes applied to the Achaean army in its uncontrolled rush to the ships in *Iliad* 2, followed by a description of a shout that reaches the heavens (142–154):

῝Ως φάτο, τοῖσι δὲ θυμὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν ὄρινε
πᾶσι μετὰ πληθὺν ὅσοι οὐ βουλῆς ἐπάκουσαν·
κινήθη δ' ἀγορὴ φὴ κύματα μακρὰ θαλάσσης
πόντου Ἰκαρίοιο, τὰ μέν τ' Εὖρός τε Νότος τε
ὤρορ' ἐπαΐξας πατρὸς Διὸς ἐκ νεφελάων.
ὡς δ' ὅτε κινήσῃ Ζέφυρος βαθὺ λήϊον ἐλθὼν
λάβρος ἐπαιγίζων, ἐπί τ' ἠμύει ἀσταχύεσσιν,
ὣς τῶν πᾶσ' ἀγορὴ κινήθη· τοὶ δ' ἀλαλητῷ
νῆας ἔπ' ἐσσεύοντο, ποδῶν δ' ὑπένερθε κονίη
ἵστατ' ἀειρομένη· τοὶ δ' ἀλλήλοισι κέλευον
ἅπτεσθαι νηῶν ἠδ' ἑλκέμεν εἰς ἅλα δῖαν,
οὐρούς τ' ἐξεκάθαιρον· ἀϋτὴ δ' οὐρανὸν ἷκεν
οἴκαδε ἱεμένων· ὑπὸ δ' ᾕρεον ἕρματα νηῶν.

So he spoke, and he roused the spirit in the breasts of all those among the multitude who had not listened to the council. The assembly was stirred like the long waves of the Icarian Sea, which the East Wind and South Wind have roused, swooping down from the clouds of Father Zeus; and as when the West Wind comes and stirs the deep standing corn, rushing violently upon it, and the ears of corn bow down; so the whole assembly stirred. The people rushed towards the ships with a loud shout, and beneath their feet a dust-cloud rose; they ordered each other to lay hold of the ships and drag them down to the immortal sea, and they cleared out the ship-channels. Their cry reached the heavens in their eagerness to go home, and they took away the props of the ships.

In Lucan the *contio* now roars in support of the one man. There are further parallels with *Iliad* 2: it is not the supreme commander (Agamemnon, Caesar), but an eloquent and decisive supporter (Odysseus, Laelius) who restores order. In both cases the restoration of order is followed by a catalogue (albeit a 'negative' catalogue in Lucan 1).

Caesar and the civilian crowd

In the sequel Caesar's advance from the Rubicon is made inexorable firstly through the crowding out, by the news of Caesar's advance, of all other topics of conversation, and then through the consequent forcing out of a literal crowd, as the population of Rome evacuates itself—1.509 *ruit inrevocabile volgus* ("nothing could keep back the rush of the people")—so undoing the whole history of a city that had begun with the

collection of a crowd for a more disciplined form of flight (*Aen.* 2.796–798): *atque hic ingentem comitum adfluxisse novorum | invenio admirans numerum, matresque virosque, | collectam exsilio pubem, miserabile vulgus* ("and here I was amazed to find that a huge number of new companions had flocked together, women and men, a people gathered for exile, a pitiable crowd"). The scenes of *Fama* and Panic, a frequent pairing, work together to pave the way for Caesar's dominance, through contrasting processes of filling and emptying: the rumours of Caesar's advance fill all the space in front of him, and the emptying of Rome's population leaves a space for the one man to fill up. Lucan notably demythologizes the Virgilian and Ovidian *Fama* in the description of the rumour, *fama*, of Caesar's approach at 1.466–486, cashing out the attributes of the personification in naturalistic terms.[29] But in a reverse movement Lucan comes close to creating a new personification of *Fama*, in the person of Caesar himself. After the successful quelling of potential mutiny, Caesar's soldiers are but an extension, embodiment even, of the man himself: in an example of what Northrop Frye called the "royal metaphor" (more properly "metonym"), Caesar is made the subject of verbs proper to the massed movements of his troops (468 *spargitur*, *complet*).[30] Being "scattered" and "filling" are also the constant activities of *fama*, and on cue *fama* makes an appearance in the next line. In line 472 it is unclear whether the countless tongues unleashed by *fama* are those of the *populus* on whom the rumours burst, or of a personified *Fama* herself. Either way, they are all wagging for Caesar, and as a result he undergoes the alarming expansion of the Virgilian *Fama* (479–480): *nec qualem meminere vident: maiorque ferusque | mentibus occurrit victoque immanior hoste* ("Men's present view of him differs from their recollection: in their mind's eye he appears greater and fiercer, and more monstrous than the enemy he has conquered"). At the end of the passage the individuals in the crowd feed the rumours (484–485): *sic quisque pavendo | dat vires famae* ("thus each by his fears adds strength to rumour"). *vires* points back in a ring to 466 *ut inmensae conlecto robore vires* ("when the vast forces of Caesar's gathered might"); the strength of the military crowd, the legions, is now

[29] So Dinter (2005) 31.

[30] On the absorption of the multitude into the person of the one man, from another perspective, see Canetti (1973) 269–270 ("Survival as a passion"): "The significance of his [a commander's] victories is measured by the number of the dead." And commenting on Plutarch on the million dead in Caesar's wars: "Their [warrior-heroes like Julius Caesar] fame depends in the end less on victory or defeat than on the monstrous numbers of their victims."

reinforced by the strength of the civilian crowd's voices; but the strength is really that of the one man Caesar. *virisque adquirit eundo* ("she gathers strength as she goes"), Virgil tells us of *Fama*, like Lucan's Caesar a figurative thunderbolt.[31] The rest of Book 1 is taken up not with the terror of panic-stricken flight, but with the terror induced by a whole crowd of omens and prodigies. *Fama* and omens work in similar ways on the impressionable popular mind, in Roman poets and historians: Lucan's prodigies here continue the process of filling, but the container for the signs of Caesar's unstoppable advance to supreme power has now been expanded from Italy to the whole universe (524–525): *superique minaces | prodigiis terras inplerunt, aethera, pontum*. These massed commotions all work together to promote the inevitable monarchy of the one man Caesar. One might compare the effect on the mass psychology of the mutineers in the German army in *Annals* 1 of the lunar eclipse, which successfully dampens down the *seditio* (1.28.1): *ut sunt mobiles ad superstitionem perculsae semel mentes* ("since minds once shocked are prone to superstition"), as Tacitus comments.[32] In that episode the mutterings and rumours in the army had threatened the power of the commander, but *superstitio* ensures that Drusus' control of the military crowd is reestablished.

Histories *1 and Crowds*

I conclude with a look at the interaction between leaders and crowds at the beginning of Tacitus' *Histories*. I take as the first extended narrative in the *Histories* (and as such corresponding in purely formal terms to the narrative of the Pannonian and German mutinies in *Annals* 1) chapters 12–49 of Book 1, the story of Galba and Otho and their competing attempts to hold on to or to secure power. The first instalment, Galba's decision to accelerate a choice of successor (Piso), is triggered by *seditio* in the legions of Upper Germany, but thereafter the action unfolds entirely in Rome, where the moves of Galba and Otho, and their respective supporters, take place against a background of crowd reaction and action, which partly are manipulated by the leading actors and partly control

[31] See Dinter (2005) 31.

[32] Goodyear compares Livy 2.7.5 (Publicola, another narrative about an *unus homo*): *consuli deinde qui superfuerat, ut sunt mutabiles volgi animi, ex favore non invidia modo sed suspicio etiam cum atroci crimine orta. regnum eum adfectare fama ferebat.*

events. At the beginning of the year of four emperors we would not expect the ultimately decisive crowd control that we have seen in our other narratives. For a small example of the crowd reaction, in the form of *fama*, controlling events, take the flood of rumours circulating about Galba's successor, which is described by Tacitus as if it aimed at active intervention in the selection process (1.12.3): *hunc vel illum ambitiosis rumoribus destinabant* ("with rumours that courted favour they marked out this man or that").[33] When it comes to the point, Tacitus suggests that Galba's choice of Piso may have been at the instance of Laco, the praetorian prefect, who concealed his own interest as a friend of Piso, and relied on "a propitious report concerning Piso" (1.14.2 *prospera de Pisone fama*) to lend credibility to his advocacy of Piso. Here Laco exploits a pre-existing popular perception to his own ends. Galba's failure seems inevitable in the light of his inability to control *fama* to his own ends.

The tragic farce of imperial power in this sequence plays out with the participation of two kinds of crowd, one civilian, the *populus et plebs* of Rome, the other military, the praetorian guard. Tacitus cooks up a rich brew of crowd behaviour: the sudden growth of rumours, in some cases perhaps deliberately manipulated, the role of *adulatio* among the urban crowd, and its tendency to behave as a crowd of spectators. Imagery of fire and disease are applied to the emotions of the soldiery. And in the case of both civilian and military crowds we see the rush of power that comes when internal distinctions of social class or military rank are broken down, and people are transformed (as Le Bon would put it) into a creature acting with a single mind.[34]

Finally in chapters 39–40 we see the inevitable superiority of the military over the civilian crowd when it comes to a decisive impact on the course of events. At 39.1 "Piso is now terrified by the hubbub of the growing mutiny [among the praetorians] and by the cries audible even in the city itself" (*iam exterritus Piso fremitu crebrescentis seditionis et vocibus in urbem usque resonantibus*). In the next chapter the stormy but paralysed civilian crowd is reduced to the status of stunned spectators looking on as the horsemen charge in hostile pursuit of their emperor Galba, in total disregard of the safety of the senate and people of Rome (40.1–2):

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[33] For other examples of the topos of *fama* marking out a successor to the throne see Hardie (forthcoming).

[34] See O'Gorman (2000) 27–41 on the strength acquired by mutineers when they unite as an indiscriminate mass.

Agebatur huc illuc Galba vario turbae fluctuantis impulsu, completis undique basilicis ac templis, lugubri prospectu. neque populi aut plebis ulla vox, sed attoniti vultus et conversae ad omnia aures; non tumultus, non quies, quale magni metus et magnae irae silentium est … igitur milites Romani … rapidi equis forum irrumpunt.

By this time, Galba was being carried hither and thither by the irregular impact of the surging multitude. Everywhere the basilicas and temples were packed with people looking at a dismal sight. Not a cry came from the people or the lower class, but their faces wore a look of shock and their ears strained to catch every sound. There was neither din nor quiet, only the hush typical of great fear and great anger … And so the Roman soldiers rushing forward on their horses broke into the forum.

(transl. Wellesley, modified)

Gwyn Morgan argues that, whereas Plutarch's version of events is built around the image of spectators in the amphitheatre (*Galba* 26.8), Tacitus has in mind a different kind of spectacle, that of the crowd waiting for the start of a chariot race in the Circus.[35] If so, the reader is referred back to that original moment when a Roman crowd waited anxiously to see which of two contenders would be their monarch, the taking of auspices by Romulus and Remus, a moment compared by Ennius in a simile to the anxious expectation of the crowd waiting for the consul to give the signal at the start of a chariot race (*Ann.* 77–83 Skutsch):

certabant urbem Romam Remoramne vocarent.
omnibus cura viris uter esset induperator.
expectant veluti, consul quom mittere signum
volt, omnes avidi spectant ad carceris oras
quam mox emittat pictos e faucibus currus:
sic expectabat populus atque ore timebat
rebus utri magni victoria sit data regni.

They contended as to whether they should call the city Roma or Remora. All men's concern was which of the two should be the ruler. They awaited, as when the consul is about to give the signal, and all look eagerly at the barriers of the starting-gate, to see how soon it will send the painted chariots forth from the openings; just so the people awaited and showed their apprehension on their faces as to which of the two would be given the victory of the great kingdom by events.

[35] Morgan (1994) 240, including among his parallels Sil. 16.314–316 *fluctuat aequoreo fremitu rabieque faventum, | carceribus nondum reseratis, mobile vulgus | atque fores oculis et limina servat equorum*: cf. *Hist.* 1.40.1 *vario turbae fluctuantis impulsu*. Morgan (1993) 324–328 points out that *Hist.* 1.62.3, the omen of an eagle vouchsafed to Fabius Valens and his troops, also alludes to Enn. *Ann.* 72–91. Immediately preceding this

Was that the first extended simile in the *Annals*?[36] If so, it is yet another model for Virgil's statesman simile in *Aeneid* 1, imposing order on a crowd after another leader, Aeolus, has opened the starting-gates (*carcer*) of a chaotic and destructive mob, wind-horses out of control.[37]

(*Hist.* 1.62.2) *instructi intentique signum profectionis exposcunt* alludes to Virg. *Aen.* 5.137 *intenti exspectant signum*, which is in turn derived from Enn. *Ann.* 79.

36 A question posed by Alessandro Barchiesi in his plenary lecture, on "Alexandria and Rome," delivered to the Classical Association conference in Liverpool, 27 March 2008.

37 *Aen.* 1.54 *carcere frenat*; 63 *habenas* (see above). Neptune will appear as the calm charioteer, 147 *atque rotis summas levibus perlabitur undas*. If it is a first simile, Ennius' also shares with the Virgilian statesman simile, and with the first extended simile proper in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1.200–205), the feature of using an event from Roman history to compare to an event in a legendary, or remoter historical, narrative.

CHAPTER TWO

CAUSATION IN POST-AUGUSTAN EPIC*

Bruce Gibson

Introduction

Quite rightly, the *Aetia* of Callimachus have played a large part in the understanding of Roman poetry. The desire to explain origins, though itself dating back in Greek literature *before* Callimachus in such places as the aetiologies of cult that are sometimes found at the end of tragedies,[1] has been identified as having a large part to play in the mechanics of Roman poetry. Recent work, such as Sara Myers' 1997 monograph, *Ovid's Causes*, has emphasised not only a Callimachean aetiological element in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, but also a link with cosmogony as well. Myers also considers more historical features of Ovid's poem, and suggests, for example, that the switch to Italian subject matter with the beginning of the retelling of the story of the *Aeneid* in *Met.* 13 intersects with the kind of material found in authors such as Varro and Nepos.[2]

If one turns from Ovid to later epic, Myers' two main areas of concern, Callimachean aetiology and cosmogony, provide useful means for thinking about some aspects of causation in post-Augustan epic. From the Callimachean perspective, one might note for instance what is in effect the massive *aetion* of the Nemean games provided in *Thebaid* 6, with its account of the funeral of the child Opheltes, and the subsequent games, which have received attention in the work of scholars such as Joanne Brown, Helen Lovatt, and Charles McNelis.[3] And for what might be termed scientific interest in causation, compare for example the

* I am indebted to audiences in Charlottesville, Manchester and Liverpool for their observations and discussion.

[1] See e.g. Oedipus' exposition of the future cult in his honour at Colonus (S. *OC* 1518–1555), or the cult of Medea's dead children foretold at E. *Med.* 1382.

[2] Myers (1997) 95–96.

[3] On the Nemean episode in the *Thebaid*, see e.g. Brown (1994); McNelis (2007) 76–96; on the games, see Lovatt (2005).

multiple possible explanations for the descent of Amphiaraus into the underworld at the end of Statius, *Thebaid* 7 (809–816), or Lucan's discussion of tides in Book 1 (409–419), where the multiple explanations of causation might be felt to recall Lucretian techniques of explanation.[4]

But in this chapter I wish to concentrate on a different aspect of causation in epic poetry after Augustus, and to consider the topic in the light of historiography. Concern with the origins of events is a major feature of historiographical texts: why did a particular event, or series of events, take place? One can consider for instance the way in which Herodotus opens his *Histories* with the aim of explaining why it was that the war between Greeks and barbarians took place (δι' ἣν αἰτίην ἐπολέμησαν ἀλλήλοισι, "through what reason they fought a war against each other"),[5] or the famous discussion of the origins of the Peloponnesian War at Thucydides 1.23.5–6.[6] Similarly, we can note Polybius' extensive discussion of causation at 3.6–7 where Polybius draws a careful distinction between *aitiai* 'causes', *prophasis* 'pretext', and *arche* 'beginning.'[7] It has well been observed that this kind of concern with causes in Greek historiography draws on poetic interest in causation,[8] which goes right back to Homer: compare, for instance, the *Iliad*'s interest in the god whose anger caused the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon (*Iliad* 1.8). Anger also has a role to play in examples of historiographical causation such as the anger (*thumos*) of Hamilcar, one of the causes of the Second Punic War (Plb. 3.9.6), and the anger (*orge*) of the Aetolians, said to have been the reason for the war between Antiochus III and Rome at Plb. 3.7.1.

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[4] For multiple explanation as a specifically Epicurean mode, see e.g. Hankinson (2001) 221–223; for multiple causation in historiography, see the discussion and bibliography at Oakley (1997–2005) II.441. There is of course a substantial range of *philosophical* interest in causation in the ancient world. From the post-Augustan period, Seneca, *Ep.* 65 is a classic treatment of philosophical causation, presenting a range of previous views (including those of Plato and Aristotle), but subordinating them to a Stoic scheme of causation; for a full treatment, see Inwood (2007) 136–155.

[5] For the Homeric qualities of Herodotus' opening, see Woodman (1988) 2; for Thucydides' echo of this phrase, see Woodman (1988) 6. Lateiner (1989) 189–210 offers useful discussion of Herodotean causation.

[6] On this passage, see e.g. Hornblower (1991) 64–66; Derow (1994) 80.

[7] See Walbank (1972) 157–163; Derow (1994) 86–88.

[8] See e.g. Marincola (2001) 10, who suggests that historiography subsequently "moved in its own direction, especially in regard to causation and explanation," 84 n. 105, 142, 146 n. 139; cf. Woodman (1988) 2.

The complexity of the relationship between poetic and historiographical causation is reflected in the Augustan period by Virgil's recasting of the *Iliad*'s enquiry as to the reason for divine anger (*Il.* 1.8) in language that evokes historiography at *A.* 1.8–11. Virgil's request to the Muse—*Musa, mihi causas memora*, "Muses, relate to me the causes"—both plays on Callimachean *aitia* (origins) and historiographical *aitiai* (causes),[9] especially as Virgil in this passage writes about a city (1.12 *Vrbs antiqua fuit*),[10] which might seem to evoke prose historiography of origins and cities, though this kind of topic also received poetic treatments as well, such as in Call. *Aetia* fr. 43 Pfeiffer, on the cities of Sicily,[11] itself perhaps recalling Thucydides' account of Greek cities in Sicily at the start of his sixth book. The fact that the city in the *Aeneid* turns out to be Carthage also points to historiography,[12] since Carthage's existence (and destruction) had been presented as factors in the causation of certain aspects of Roman history: thus Sallust had linked the fall of Carthage with the onset of moral failings in Rome, at *Cat.* 10.1 and *Jug.* 41.2–5, and also at *Hist.* 1.11 Reynolds.[13] That the *Aeneid*'s opening question to the Muse evokes not only the opening of the *Iliad* but also the concerns of aetiological poetry and prose historiography suggests the overlapping and porous nature of the relationship between poetic and historiographical causation. In the post-Augustan period, this is, for example, neatly illustrated almost at the end of our text of Valerius Flaccus, where the Greek abduction of Medea from Colchis is adduced in an almost Herodotean fashion as a reason for the Trojan war (V. Fl. 8.395–396; cf. Hdt. 1.1–2).[14]

Here, a word is perhaps in order about subject coverage and overall plotting in Roman epic, which are of course factors relevant to causation. The manner in which the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* present only a

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[9] Cf. the second proem at *A.* 7.37–45, with the discussion of Ash (2002) 262–263 for intersections between Virgil's concern for the causation of the war in Italy and historiographical texts; see also Horsfall (2000) 68 on *A.* 7.37–45 for historiographical influence on this passage.

[10] On this phrase, see Ahl, Davis, and Pomeroy (1986) 2494–2495; see also Thuc. 1.24.1, with Rhodes (1998). Perhaps compare Sall. *Cat.* 6.1 *Vrbem Romam, sicuti ego accepi*, Tac. *Ann.* 1.1.1.

[11] For the importance of foundation and kinship as themes of both prose and poetic texts, see e.g. Jones (1995) 234–236. For Callimachus' treatment of the cities of Sicily in the *Aetia* as an influence on Virgil in *Aeneid* 3, see e.g. Geymonat (1993) 329–331; Nappa (2004).

[12] On the evocation of Ennius' treatment of Carthage here, see Feeney (1991) 130–131.

[13] For links between Virgil and Sallust, see e.g. Ash (2002) 257–266.

[14] See further Hershkowitz (1998) 236, Zissos (2002) 85–87.

section of their stories is of course well known, as is Horace's critique of cyclic epic in the *Ars Poetica* (136–147) for trying to cover the whole of something like the Trojan War. The Horace passage can be seen as endorsing praise already found in Aristotle, where Homer is lauded for having selected only a section of the *Iliad*'s story, and where it is suggested that whereas history might focus on the events of a single period, poetry might properly deal with a single action (*praxis*) (*Poetics* 1459a). But what is remarkable about Horace's critique of cyclic epic is how little impact it seems to have had on Latin epic poetry. Leaving aside Virgil's *Aeneid*, none of the five post-Virgilian Latin epicists seems to have taken that much notice of Horace's instructions. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is perhaps a striking and difficult example, with its coverage of events from primal Chaos down to the deification of Julius Caesar being combined with a manner of composition which of course concentrates on single episodes, but of the others, Lucan's epic, even if one were to agree with Masters' suggestion that it finishes where Lucan intended it to,[15] hardly fits the mould, and neither does the incomplete *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus;[16] as for the *Achilleid*, in a brazen rejection of Horace, it promises to go through the whole of Achilles' career (*Ach.* 1.7).[17] Similarly, Silius' *Punica* deals with the whole of the Second Punic War (even if the degree of coverage of varying episodes is quite diverse), while the *Thebaid*, even if it teasingly evokes Horace's prescription in terms of declining to deal with the whole range of Theban subjects (1.7–17),[18] nevertheless covers the whole of the war at Thebes, and, in Book 12, the whole of the brief war between Athens under Theseus and Thebes. The point can thus be made that in their scope and ambition post-Virgilian epics already have something in common with historical modes of narration—or at least non-Homeric modes, in terms of what we find on plotting (and hence causation) in Aristotle and Horace.

This paper will accordingly consider various aspects of causation in post-Virgilian epic: the causation of wars, the role of rumours, ideas of moral decline, and finally the effects of speeches.

[15] Masters (1992) 216–259.

[16] For a summary of views on the *Argonautica*'s scope and number of books, see Zissos (2008) xxvi–xxviii.

[17] See e.g. Heslin (2005) 81–82.

[18] See Gibson (2004) 154; McNelis (2007) 50–51.

The Causation of Wars

I begin briefly with Lucan, who explains his desire to expound the causes of the civil war between Caesar and Pompey at 1.67–69:

> fert animus causas tantarum expromere rerum,
> inmensumque aperitur opus, quid in arma furentem
> inpulerit populum, quid pacem excusserit orbi.
>
> My mind leads me to expound the causes of such great events, and a huge task is opened up, what drove a raging people to arms, what shook peace away from the world.

In an article on Lucan's relationship to the historical record published in *Classical Quarterly* in 1971, Andrew Lintott discussed Lucan's treatment of the origins of the civil war, and showed how Lucan's themes find their counterparts in the historical tradition, in respect of the emphasis on Rome's collapse through greatness (1.70–72), the breakdown of the second triumvirate (1.84–157), and then the social causes for the outbreak of the civil war (1.158–182).[19] Lintott shows how Lucan's views are in the mainstream of the Roman historical tradition about the fall of the republic: even though Lucan does not engage with issues such as the *Rechtsfrage*, the whole question over the legality of the expiry of Caesar's Gallic command, or attempts to negotiate between the two sides, he does engage with issues such as the role of Curio in the outbreak of the civil war.[20] At the same time, Lintott's study is characterised by an emphasis on Lucan's content rather than his method: while he does observe similarities in details between Lucan and historical writers in their accounts of the civil war, he pays little attention to the fact that there is no reason why their *methodology* should not be the same (Lintott (1971) 498):

> His belief that the coalition of 59 made civil war inevitable was the standard view in antiquity and still is today, and he expounded it brilliantly. His treatment of the origin of the civil war avoids much historical detail but is clearly based on knowledge of the facts and assumes that the reader has the same knowledge.

An aspect of Lucan's treatment that perhaps deserves comment is the placing of a section on the civil war's origins at the outset of the work: such a detailed emphasis on the causes of the war is one of the ways in which Lucan's text resembles a historical text, especially if Livy too had a

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[19] Lintott (1971) 493–497.
[20] Lintott (1971) 497.

separate section on the causes of the war, as Radicke has argued on the basis of a reference to *causae civilium armorum et initia* in the *Periocha* of Livy Book 109.[21] In this respect Lucan's treatment of causation has more in common with historiographical practice than the opening of Caesar's *Bellum Civile*, which opens very quickly with an account of deliberations in the senate on how to deal with Caesar, which in Polybian terms could only be seen as a simple treatment of beginnings, the *archai* of the war, and not as a treatment of causes or even pretexts.

If we turn to Silius Italicus, he too shows an interest in expounding the causes of the Second Punic War, which had been a particular concern not only for Livy, but also for Polybius in his third book. Silius' emphasis on the causes of the anger on the Carthaginian side is worth examining here (1.17–20):[22]

> Tantarum causas irarum odiumque perenni
> servatum studio et mandata nepotibus arma
> fas aperire mihi superasque recludere mentes.
> iamque adeo magni repetam primordia motus.

> It is right for me to make manifest the causes of such great anger, and the hatred that was maintained with eternal zeal and the orders that were handed down to descendants, and to open up the minds of the gods. Now, therefore, I will seek to go back over the origins of this great disturbance.

Here, the concern to deal with the causes of anger draws on the tradition of epic anger as a theme, as well as continuing Virgil's and Lucan's device of an opening move which simultaneously recalls both aetiological poetry and historiography's concern with causation, with Silius' *tantarum causas irarum* (1.17) as a brilliant encapsulation of Virgil's request to the Muse for *causas* (*A.* 1.8), and his *tantae animis caelestibus irae* (*A.* 1.11), as well as evoking Lucan's *causas tantarum … rerum* (1.67). What sequence of causes does Silius then go on to offer?

Silius begins with what at first sight appears to be explicable in terms of Virgil, rather than historiography, offering his account of Dido's arrival in Carthage and Juno's favour for the city, before noting, just as Virgil had described Juno's anxieties about the Trojans in *Aeneid* 1, how Juno feared Rome's rise to power, and as a result spurred on the Carthaginians to further activity, even after the unsuccessful outcome of the First Punic War (Sil. 1.21–37). After this comes a speech of complaint from

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21 See Radicke (2004) 163.

22 See further on this passage von Albrecht (1964) 18–20; Küppers (1986) 29–31, 61–64.

Juno (Sil. 1.42–54), which recalls the speech of Juno at the start of the *Aeneid* (1.37–49).[23]

However, Silius then gives a character sketch of Hannibal (1.56–60), which, as Denis Feeney has observed,[24] recalls not only Livy's sketch of Hannibal's character (21.4.5–9), but also Lucan's presentation of Caesar's character in 1.143–157. Here, the placement of the character sketch of Hannibal at the start of the work suggestively recalls its placement in Livy, or indeed the placement of Sallust's character sketch of Catiline towards the beginning of the *Bellum Catilinae* (5.1–8). This initial emphasis on the character of a protagonist should be seen as a key way in which Silius imitates historiographical practice: the deployment of the character sketch so early in the work makes Silius' approach seem more historical, especially when character is seen as part of the process of explaining historical events.

Silius next goes on to describe the oath taken by Hannibal; here Feeney on Sil. 1.81–139 rightly comments that Silius' decision to site Hannibal's oath of eternal enmity against the Romans in the temple of Dido is a brilliant realignment of the oath (which was already a common feature of the historical tradition[25]) that links it with the *Aeneid* and Dido's curse. But Silius' account also plays on other aspects of the historiographical tradition: the emphasis on the anger of Hamilcar (1.71 *patrius furor*) recalls not only Livy's account (see Liv. 21.1.5), but also Polybius' indication that the anger of Hamilcar was one of the causes of the war (Plb. 3.9), along with the loss of Sardinia and the expansion of Carthaginian power in Spain (Plb. 3.10). Strikingly, for all the emphasis on the mythical causation and the Virgilian links with Dido, Silius' account, which explicitly declares an interest in the causes of the war, in terms of method has more in common with Polybius than with Livy. By contrast, Livy's account of the outbreak of the war is, curiously, less analytical; thus Livy gives details of the oath, the plans of Hamilcar, an account of Hasdrubal's period of command in Spain and the succession of Hannibal to that command and his subsequent activities in Spain—but when Livy refers to a *belli causa* at 21.6.1, it is simply Hannibal's operations against various peoples in Spain which are so described.

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23 See e.g. Ahl, Davis, and Pomeroy (1986) 2495; Küppers (1986) 85–88; Feeney (1991) 303–304.

24 See also Feeney (1982) 47–49 on Sil. 1.56–69; Ahl, Davis, and Pomeroy (1986) 2511–2512.

25 Feeney (1982) 60–61 on Sil. 1.81–139; see also Ahl, Davis, and Pomeroy (1986) 2495–2496.

There is a further point to note when considering Silius' treatment of Dido's foundation of Carthage. This too may after all reflect a more historiographical tradition at the same time as evoking Virgil's *Aeneid*. This is because the *Periocha* of Livy 16 tells us that Livy wrote on the origin of the city of Carthage (Livy, *Periocha* 16 init.):

> Origo Carthaginiensium et primordia urbis eorum referuntur. contra quos et Hieronem, regem Syracusanorum, auxilium Mamertinis ferendum senatus censuit, cum de ea re inter suadentes, ut id fieret, dissuadentesque contentio fuisset; transgressisque tunc primum mare equitibus Romanis adversus Hieronem saepius bene pugnatum. petenti pax data est.

> The origin of the Carthaginians and the beginnings of their city are related. Against them and against Hiero, king of the Syracusans, the senate decided that help should be conveyed to the Mamertines, although there had been a dispute in that matter between those who were encouraging this policy to be enacted, and those who were against it; and when the Roman cavalry had then crossed over the sea for the first time, there was more than one successful battle against Hiero. Peace was granted to him when he requested it.

The *Periocha* gives a summary of how Livy had written about the outbreak of the first Punic War, Livy beginning, as Polybius did in Book 1, with the Roman decision to assist the Marmertines in Messana. Polybius, however, did not write on the origins of the Carthaginians at the start of his First Punic War narrative in Book 1. Livy's opening move in Book 16 is notable for two reasons. First, if Oakley is right to suggest that it is likely that Livy may have published as many as 35 books before the appearance of the *Aeneid*,[26] then Virgil's opening discussion of Carthage and his decision to start the epic with the city of Carthage[27] would have been highly topical in the light of the recent publication of Livy 16. Secondly, both Virgil and Silius, in opening their epics with Carthage, would not only perhaps be evoking the *origo* of Carthage which appears to have been given at the start of Ennius *Annales* 7,[28] but would be making a move characteristic of an historian (compare the way in which Thucydides begins Book 6 with the antiquities of Sicily—itself something consciously echoed by Silius at the start of Book 14).[29] Consideration of Ennius here

[26] Oakley (1997–2005) I.110 n. 2.

[27] On the use of Carthage at the opening of *Aeneid* 1, see e.g. Feeney (1991) 130.

[28] See Skutsch (1985) 367 for the *origo Carthaginis*; note also the account of the origin of the Illyrian kingdom placed by Festus in *Annales* 16 (Skutsch 1985: 570–572).

[29] On the Sicilian digression at the start of *Punica* 14, see Bona (1998) 233–252, Gibson (2010) 56–67.

should remind us that there is a strong sense in which the interactions between epic and historiography are highly complex and require a long view of Latin literature.

If we turn to the immediate outbreak of the Second Punic War, what Polybius would call the *arche*, then Silius' treatment reflects, if nothing else, the skill of a historiographer in dealing—or rather not dealing—with unfavourable material. Thus Polybius' point (3.15.10) that war with Rome would have been just if Hannibal had decided to go to war over Sardinia instead of over Saguntum, is completely lost in Silius, who makes no reference at all to Sardinia at the outset of his poem.[30] Similarly, the presentation of the siege of Saguntum shows Silius following the supposed annalistic traditions that the Roman embassy which attempted to warn Hannibal arrived during the siege, not before it, as in Polybius (3.15): the effect of this is of course to make Hannibal appear worse.[31] And though Tacitus would remark that it did not matter if one praised the Carthaginians or Romans in a history (*Ann.* 4.33.4 *neque refert cuiusquam Punicas Romanasne acies laetius extuleris*, "nor does it matter to anyone whether you praise the Punic or Roman battle-lines with more joy"),[32] one should not forget that the poet of historical epic has choices in the deployment of and representation of events.

Fame and Rumours

If we turn from historical epic to mythological epic, we can also see similar interest in the historical topos of the causation of wars. In his *Argonautica*, Valerius presents the conflict which takes place in Colchis, fought between Aeetes and his brother Perses.[33] The manner in which

[30] It was already diluted in Livy, who (21.1.5) somewhat tendentiously refers to Hamilcar's distaste for the loss of not only Sardinia, but also Sicily (which had been incontestably lost as a result of the treaty concluded by Lutatius Catulus in 241 BC). Note Livy's brilliant use of *oratio obliqua* in the passage as a means of dealing with the Romans' duplicitous conduct over Sardinia in the aftermath of the Mercenary War: *angebant ingentis spiritus virum Sicilia Sardiniaque amissae: nam et Siciliam nimis celeri desperatione rerum concessam et Sardiniam inter motum Africae fraude Romanorum, stipendio etiam insuper imposito, interceptam.*

[31] On this tradition, see Walbank (1957) 320 on Plb. 3.15.2.

[32] Woodman (2009b) 37 suggests that Tacitus may here be alluding to Silius.

[33] On Aeetes' brother, Perses, see Wijsman (1996) 142 on V.Fl. 5.266. The name Perses may also evoke that of Hesiod's difficult brother in the *Works and Days*.

this war is presented is worth considering. At V.Fl. 5.259–261, ill omens[34] lead to a discussion in Colchis over what to do with the golden fleece, and Aeetes and his brother quarrel, with Perses leaving the city, only to return immediately with an army (5.271–275):

> rapit inde fugam crudelia Perses
> signa gerens omnemque quatit rumoribus Arcton.
> iamque aderat magnis regum cum milibus urbi
> primaque in adversos frustratus proelia muros
> constiterat.

> Perses takes flight from there carrying with him the marks of this cruelty, and he agitates the whole of the North with rumours. And already he was present at the city with kings in great thousands, and, disappointed in his first battles against the opposing walls, he had come to a halt.

Here Perses himself is the agent of *rumores* as a means of precipitating action. For this, one can compare examples in historiography where rumours themselves have a role in the causation of subsequent events.[35] And Perses is similarly associated with the effects of rumours at the start of Book 6, where the Scythian allies of Perses are moved by the *fama* that Aeetes has made some kind of compact with the Argonauts (6.9–13).[36]

Rumours also play a part in other texts. In Statius, compare *Theb.* 2.201 *fuso rumore per urbem*, "when the rumour has been spread through the city," with reference to news of the decision of Adrastus to marry his daughters to the newcomers Polynices and Tydeus, which gives rise to the general gathering at Argos for the wedding. Similarly at *Theb.* 7.457, rumour again has a causal role, as reports of the arrival of the Argives come in, followed by a passage which reveals the effects of such reports on the Thebans (7.455–463):

> discurrunt muris; nil saeptum horrore sub illo,
> nil fidum satis, invalidaeque Amphionis arces.
> rumor ubique alius plures adnuntiat hostes,
> maioresque timor; spectant tentoria contra
> Inachia externosque suis in montibus ignes.

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[34] Two examples from the many modern discussions of omens and prodigies in Roman historiography are Levene (1993) 38–77 (on Livy's third decade), and Ash (1999b) 129–136 (on Tacitus, *Histories*).

[35] For a survey of this phenomenon in Tacitus, see Gibson (1998).

[36] Fucecchi (2006) 75 compares various Virgilian examples, but see also Liv. 9.20.10 and Sall. *Jug.* 30.1 for the use of *fama* in historiographical texts.

hi precibus questuque deos, hi Martia tela
belligerosque hortantur equos, hi pignora fletu
cara premunt miserique rogos et crastina mandant
funera.

They run about on the walls; confronted by such terror, nothing is fortified, nothing can be relied on sufficiently, and the walls of Amphion are deemed weak. Everywhere another rumour declares that more enemies are at hand, and fear says they are stronger; they see opposite them the tents of the Argives and enemies' camp-fires on their own mountains. Some urge on the gods with entreaties and complaint, some urge on their weapons of Mars and their horses that bring war, some press close their dear children as they weep, and in wretchedness give instructions for their funeral pyres and rites on the next day.

Though of course *rumor* is a feature of epic texts as well,[37] the emphasis on the behaviour of a city recalls historical accounts of the effects of news and rumours.[38] Similarly, in the *Achilleid*, rumour is responsible for the disguised Achilles' desire to see the Greek visitors (*Ach.* 1.750–755), while at *Ach.* 2.66 reports of the departure of Helen lead to the gathering of the suitors.

In keeping with the complex interweaving of epic and historiography, we also find rumour as a mode that is used in historical epic as well. Thus Book 4 of the *Punica*, just after Hannibal's crossing of the Alps, opens with an evocation of the effect of rumours of Hannibal's invasion. Silius begins by writing of Fama, and then moves on to describing the effects of fear as well (4.1–9):

Fama per Ausoniae turbatas spargitur urbes
nubiferos montes et saxa minantia caelo
accepisse iugum, Poenosque per invia vectos,
aemulaque Herculei iactantem facta laboris
descendisse ducem. diros canit improba motus
et gliscit gressu volucrique citatior Euro
terrificis quatit attonitas rumoribus arces.[39]
adstruit auditis docilis per inania rerum
pascere rumorem vulgi pauor:

[37] Virgil's *Fama* (*A.* 4.173–195) is of course the most celebrated instance, though the concept is as old as Homer's *Ossa* (*Il.* 2.93–94, *Od.* 24.413).

[38] Compare e.g. Thuc. 8.1 and Plut. *Nicias* 30 (the reactions of the Athenians to the disaster in Sicily); Tac. *Ann.* 2.82.4–5 (false reports reach Rome of Germanicus' improved health).

[39] Note that *quatit attonitas rumoribus arces* appears to echo the phrasing of V.Fl. 5.272 *omnemque quatit rumoribus Arcton*, cited above, where Wijsman (1996) 144 compares V.Fl. 2.122 (Fama) *motis quatit oppida linguis*.

> Fame is scattered through the troubled cities of Italy, relating that the cloud-bearing mountains and the rocks that threaten the sky have accepted the yoke in submission, and that the Carthaginians have travelled through pathless places, and that the general who boasts of deeds that rival those of Hercules has come down from the mountains. Unprincipled Fame sings of dread stirrings, and grows as she progresses, and swifter than the flying East wind she agitates the thunderstruck cities with terrifying rumours. Then fear, skilled at feeding the crowd's rumour through false narratives, added to what they had heard.

This passage is striking for presenting the news of Hannibal's arrival in two different ways. The beginning opens with the traditional mode of Fama spreading the news, with *canit* in line 5 reflecting the personification of the Virgilian Fama of *Aeneid* 4 (cf. 4.190 *canebat*). But even *fama* itself is a concept which is not solely Virgilian and also has a role in historiography.[40] And after the reference to *fama*, we can also note the reference to fear at the end of the passage. This sets in sharp juxtaposition an alternative strategy, with the more abstract reflection that fear has its role to play as well. It is as if Silius presents two modes of presenting the effects of news and rumour: one perhaps characteristic of epic, and one characteristic of historiography.[41]

Processes of Moral Decline

I would like now to consider another more complex aspect of what one might more broadly term historical causation, processes of decline which contribute to the unfolding of historical events. This is of course a common idea in prose historical texts, exemplified in such instances as Sallust's belief that the fall of Carthage was a decisive turning-point in Roman morality (*Cat.* 10.1–2), as well as less obvious examples as

[40] Oakley (1997–2005) III.51 for instance (on Liv. 9.2.4) has an impressive list of places where *fama volgata* is found (Liv. 1.7.2, 3.40.13, 25.17.4, 28.24.15, 35.31.11, 37.51.8, 39.46.7, 42.63.1, 45.10.5; Tac. *Hist.* 4.62.3, *Ann.* 1.59.1).

[41] Compare the reports of the defeated Varro's imminent arrival in the city after Cannae in *Punica* 10. Like Livy, Silius presents a picture first of unclear rumour, describing how the report of the defeat arrived in Rome (10.578–580), while Livy (22.54) instead reports on the rumour that Rome had lost both consuls at Cannae, remarking on his inability to describe what had happened. Livy then describes how Fabius Maximus made suggestions for the measures which the city needed to take (22.55), while Silius (10.584–591) concentrates on the scenes of grief in the city, before Fabius gives a speech with the suggestion that the Romans should defend their walls. See further Nicol (1936) 45–46.

Polybius' remarks on the tribunate of C. Flaminius, and its effects on the Roman people (2.21.8), to say nothing of something more elaborate such as Polybius' analysis of the *anacyclosis*, the cycle of constitutions, in Book 6, and the various hints at possible Roman decline, especially of a moral kind. Such examination of processes of decline, however, crosses into poetic texts as well.

A famous example from Silius comes in the passage of praise of Rome at the time of Cannae, *haec tum Roma fuit* (10. 657),[42] where the Roman refusal to ransom their prisoners is an indication of greatness in the height of adversity. In his treatment of this moment of crisis, Silius in fact has more in common with Polybius than Livy. The detail of the refusal to ransom the prisoners exactly recalls the way Polybius ends his account of the Roman constitution in Book 6 with the Romans' refusal to consider a ransom (6.58), and his emphasis on the aftermath of Cannae as the *akme* and power of the Roman state—6.58.1 οἵα τις ἦν κατ' ἐκείνους τοὺς χρόνους, "such as it was at that time"—where the temporal perspective is exactly parallel to that used in Silius. In contrast to Silius and Polybius, Livy ends Book 22 with the refusal to ransom the prisoners and then the anecdote of the congratulations offered to Terentius Varro (22.61.14–15), without any explicit reflection on Cannae as a watershed moment in the history of Roman greatness.[43]

Another key passage occurs at the end of Silius Book 14, where Silius comments on Marcellus' decision to spare the city of Syracuse.[44] Silius notes that the decision to spare the city would leave it as an example to the future (14.682–688):

> ergo extat saeclis stabitque insigne tropaeum
> et dabit antiquos ductorum noscere mores.
>
> felices populi, si, quondam ut bella solebant,
> nunc quoque inexhaustas pax nostra relinqueret urbes!
> at, ni cura viri qui nunc dedit otia mundo

[42] On this passage, see also the discussions of Feeney, at http://uts.cc.utexas.edu/~silver/Silius/silius-poem.html (consulted 26 August 2009); Fowler (2000) 123–127; Tipping (2007) 226–231.

[43] Connections between Polybius and Silius here are played down by Marks (2005) 254 (cf. Ahl, Davies and Pomeroy (1986) 2506 who note a parallel with Plb. 6.2 and 6.8, but then remark that it is unlikely that Silius was directly influenced by Polybius, suggesting instead that he may have derived this approach from Coelius Antipater), but, as discussed in Gibson (2010), we should not perhaps be so ready to rule out Silian intertextuality with a wider range of historiographical texts in both Greek and Latin.

[44] On this episode, see Ahl, Davis, and Pomeroy (1986) 2538; Feeney (2007) 52 and n. 49, with further reading.

effrenum arceret populandi cuncta furorem,
nudassent avidae terrasque fretumque rapinae.

Therefore it survives down the centuries, and will stand as a renowned trophy, permitting knowledge of the ancient ways of the commanders.

O peoples that would be fortunate, if, as wars used to do in the past, now too would our peace leave the cities undepleted! But, were it not that the concern of the man who now gives peace to the world is holding in check an unbridled madness for devastating everything, greedy plunderings would have stripped bare the lands and the sea.

Whilst it is true that these lines of course include a panegyric element, offering praise of the *uir* who wards off the *furor populandi*,[45] there is a strong implication here of a process of decline, so that it is not war but the imperial peace which inflicts devastation on the cities of Rome's provinces; we can note moreover how Silius teasingly evokes aetiological practice with the words *nunc quoque*, often used to draw attention to continuity between present and past,[46] but here used to mark out the grotesque paradox that in the contemporary world it is peacetime rather than war which brings about depredations on the empire's cities. A similar passage which also engages with these ideas of moral decline is Sil. 15.125–127, where Voluptas, thwarted in her contest with Virtus to win over Scipio Africanus, imagines that in the future she will be held in honour in Rome.[47]

Lucan engages with this concept of decline towards the end of his account of the causes of the civil war. Thus at 1.158–182, he moves from discussing the personalities of Caesar and Pompey and their role in the origins of the civil war, to considering the *publica belli* | *semina*, "the public seeds of war" (1.158–159), which he associates with the onset of luxury. Lucan goes on to consider such factors as the rise of large estates, and some of the more chaotic features of the end of the Republic such as tribunician interventions, and the prevalence of bribery. Lintott

[45] The passage is usually seen as referring to the emperor Domitian: see e.g. Roosjen (1996) 311 and n. 850; Marks (2005) 252; Cowan (2007) 35. But even if the original reference was to Domitian, it is hard to see how the praise here of the unspecified *uir* might have not shifted onto Domitian's successors after his death, especially in the light of attempts to differentiate Trajan from the divine pretensions ascribed to Domitian (see e.g. Plin. *Pan.* 2.3–4).

[46] See Myers (1997) 66–67 for full discussion and examples.

[47] On these lines, see e.g. Marks (2005) 256; Cowan (2007) 40–41. The larger episode of the choice of Scipio between Virtus and Voluptas recalls Prodicus' story of the similar choice offered to Heracles (Xen. *Mem.* 2.1.21–34): see further Ripoll (2000) 165–170.

has considered this section of the poem in terms of parallels between Lucan's treatment of these ideas and Florus' account of the reasons for the crises of the late Republic (*Epit.* 1.47.8–13) and Tacitus' account of the moral corruption which followed the laws of the Twelve Tables (*Ann.* 3.27),[48] but it is also important to note that Lucan is giving his work the conventions of historiography, using ideas of decline as part of his causation of the poem's action.

Nor are such motifs confined to historical epic. At the opening of the *Thebaid*, Statius makes it clear that the war over kingship in Thebes is not a war which is to do with luxury, emphasing instead how Thebes at the time was a place of the utmost simplicity (and here one should note that the war at Thebes takes place before that of Troy). At first sight, Statius seems to exclude the narratives of decline that are open to historians, by making it clear that the events going on at Thebes are nothing to do with any kind of luxury (1.144–164), or indeed any desire on the part of the protagonists for gaining power throughout the world. But this reference to luxury also evokes Lucan as well, since Lucan's second set of causes for the civil war includes a series of lines which set out the effects that luxury has (1.160–167). When Statius addresses the brothers at *Theb.* 1.155–156 *quo tenditis iras, | a, miseri?*, this is potentially an echo of Luc. 1.190 *quo tenditis ultra?*, addressed by the goddess Roma to Caesar's forces at the Rubicon. The engagement with Lucan's causation becomes more involved, since Statius immediately explains that the whole world was not being fought for in the war at Thebes (1.156–164), effecting a contrast with Luc. 1.95–97, where Lucan explains that the primal Roman fratricide of Romulus and Remus took place in order to win control of what was simply an *exiguum … asylum* (1.97).

On the surface, Statius appears to have rejected some of the explanations for war offered by Lucan, in terms of a corrupting process of moral decline. However, even though Statius emphasises the lack of wealth, and indeed may echo Lucretius 5.1423–1435, where warfare between primitive men is said to be more understandable, owing to the scarcity of resources, Statius uses the idea of a primitive Thebes to set up an idea of the past which will then be successively undermined by the deployment of anachronistic *Realien* elsewhere in the poem. This is most evident, it is

[48] Lintott (1971) 495–497, who speculates on the possibility of a common source used by Lucan, Florus, and Tacitus. See also Radicke (2004) 170, who notes possible links with Livy 109, which, according to the opening of the *Periocha*, began with the *causae ciuilium armorum*.

true, outside of Thebes: consider, for instance, the opulent spices used at the funeral of Opheltes in *Theb.* 6 which echo the lavish descriptions of funerals found in the *Silvae*, but even in Thebes itself there are traces of luxury: thus Eteocles in *Theb.* 2 is said to have laid his limbs out on a bed which includes *Assyriis … tapetibus* (2.91), while the luxurious accoutrements of Eunaeus (7.656–661), and of Atys, the betrothed of Isemene (8.564–568),[49] also point to a more complex picture. Statius thus evokes the theme of luxury causing decline, with its long resonance in Rome's own history, whilst at the same time suggesting that the usual patterning of the past as a remote and primitive time of austere virtue to be contrasted with the decadence of more recent times is not so straightforward after all.[50]

The Effectiveness of Speeches

I turn now to some brief consideration of the role of speeches in epic of this period.[51] Assuredly, speeches are an integral feature of epic from its earliest times. Nevertheless, I would suggest that the overlap with historiography may be relevant in Latin epic poetry in terms of the way speeches themselves have a role in the plotting and causation of events. In the remainder of this chapter, I will offer some brief observations on examples from Lucan which seem to offer comment on more customary historiographical practice.

My first example is in fact of a speech which fails to have the desired effect on the speaker's audience. At Luc. 1.299–351, Caesar addresses his troops in stirring fashion, telling them to take up his cause in the civil war, and to prevent the prospect of Pompey's domination of Rome. At the end of the oration, the succeeding lines (1.352–356)[52] show an initial failure to influence the soldiers, even though fear will in the end have its effect on them: *sed diro ferri revocantur amore | ductorisque metu*, "but they are called back by their dread love of the sword and fear of their commander" (1.355–356). It is interesting to set Lucan's presentation of this speech alongside that of Caesar himself:

[49] Though note that Atys' home city is Cirrha (*Theb.* 8.556).

[50] Perhaps compare Tac. *Ann.* 3.55 (especially sections 4–5), where Tacitus points out that luxurious dining abated somewhat under the Flavians, for another instance of the typical dynamic of straightforward moral decline being called into question.

[51] See also Gibson (2010) 67–71, where I discuss some of the speeches in Silius Italicus.

[52] See also Radicke (2004) 188–189 on these lines.

dixerat; at dubium non claro murmure volgus
secum incerta fremit. pietas patriique penates
quamquam caede feras mentes animosque tumentes
frangunt; sed diro ferri revocantur amore
ductorisque metu. (Luc. 1.352–356)

He had spoken; but the hesitant crowd, with an unclear murmur, groaned uncertainly within themselves. Piety and their ancestral household gods break their wills, though made savage with slaughter, and their overweening spirits; but they are called back by their dread love of the sword and fear of their commander.

hortatur, cuius imperatoris ductu viiii annis rem publicam felicissime gesserint plurimaque proelia secunda fecerint, omnem Galliam Germaniamque pacaverint, ut eius existimationem dignitatemque ab inimicis defendant. conclamant legionis xiii, quae aderat, milites—hanc enim initio tumultus evocaverat, reliquae nondum convenerant—sese paratos esse imperatoris sui tribunorumque plebis iniurias defendere.
(Caesar, *BC* 1.7.7–8)

He urges them that they should protect from his enemies the esteem and dignity of the general under whose command they have during nine years conducted the work of the state with great good fortune, fought a great many successful battles, and have pacified all of Gaul and Germany. The soldiers of the thirteenth legion, which was present—for he had summoned this one at the beginning of the disturbance, but the rest of them were not yet present—cry out that they are ready to defend the wrongs done against their own commander and the tribunes of the plebs.

Here the military narrative of Caesar shows a straightforward chain of causation: oratory causes the soldiers to adopt the view required of them by their leader. Lucan's position is more subtle, involving the use of indirect speech to give a sense of lack of clarity amongst the soldiers, and also directly denying the immediate effectiveness of the oratory. In narrative terms, it is actually Lucan's narrative which implies a tighter sequence of causation for this episode, since there is perhaps a hint that the reason Caesar has to give the speech at all is that the soldiers are not perhaps so loyal and committed as they might at first sight seem.[53]

My second example is also from Book 1, and also deals with what may be regarded as a breakdown in causation. At Luc. 1.248–257, the people of Ariminum are given a collective speech, which is, fascinatingly, a speech whose presentation in the narrative operates on the premise that silence

[53] For another example in Lucan, compare the effect of the speech made by Pompey at 2.531–595 where the speech immediately falls flat (2.596–600); for an historical example of Pompey's unsuccessful oratory, see Cic. *Att.* 1.14.1.

is better than speech.[54] I quote here the surrounding narrative frame, but not the speech itself (1.244–249, 257–265):

> ut notae fulsere aquilae Romanaque signa
> et celsus medio conspectus in agmine Caesar,
> deriguere metu, gelidos pavor occupat artus,
> et tacito mutos volvunt in pectore questus.
> 'o male vicinis haec moenia condita Gallis, …
> [lines 249–256 omitted]
> hac iter est bellis.' gemitu sic quisque latenti,
> non ausus timuisse palam: vox nulla dolori
> credita, sed quantum, volucres cum bruma coercet,
> rura silent, mediusque tacet sine murmure pontus,
> tanta quies. noctis gelidas lux solverat umbras:
> ecce, faces belli dubiaeque in proelia menti
> urguentes addunt stimulos cunctasque pudoris
> rumpunt fata moras: iustos Fortuna laborat
> esse ducis motus et causas invenit armis.

> When the well-known eagles and the Roman standards shone out, and Caesar was seen on high in the midst of the throng, they became stiff with terror, fear sweeps through their cold limbs, and in their silent breasts they ponder noiseless complaints. "Alas for these walls that were wretchedly founded with the Gauls as neighbours … through here is a path to wars." In this way each of them, with a hidden groan, did not dare to be openly afraid: no tongue was entrusted with their grief, but just as when winter keep the birds pent up, and the countryside is silent, and the high seas are quiet without a murmur, such was the quiet there. Light had loosened the chill shadows of night: behold, the Fates bring the torches of war and goads that prey on a mind that was hesitating towards battle, and crush all the delay occasioned by shame. Fortune strives that the general's stirrings should be just, and finds reasons for his warfare.

The content of the speech itself consists of complaints about the unfortunate geographical position of Ariminum which has left the citizens perennially exposed to danger. Lucan remarkably combines direct speech, a classic feature of epic and of historiography, with an admission in the surrounding frame that the remarks are not actually ever delivered, thus showing an acute awareness of historiographical strategies for conveying wider opinions, which can lead to action—or, as here, to inaction: the speech in fact turns out to play no part in the causation of the subsequent events, and in this sense we may again see Lucan as offering wry comment on the role of speeches in historiography. For these kinds of collective utterances, one can compare for instance the way historians

[54] For the complexities of speech and silence in Lucan, see Too (1998) 182–185.

use indirect speech techniques to give a sense of wider views, such as the short utterance of the XIIIth legion used by Caesar that we have just seen, or e.g. the pair of chapters in Tacitus, *Annals* 1.9 and 1.10 which offer opinions on Augustus, or *Ann.* 2.82, where a whole series of views are offered on the death of Germanicus. Here the use of direct speech, seemingly so at odds with the kind of covert utterance which is being made here, is effective precisely because it draws our attention to a convention of historiography, and because it shows the problems of discourse under a monarchy or proto-monarchy.

Conclusion

The relationship of epic and historiography in imperial epic is one that repays revisiting, and a recognition that historiography should be seen as contributing to Roman epic is a useful counter to the somewhat one-sided tendency of concentrating only on the influence of Greek epic on early Greek historiography. This is especially true since, as the last example from Lucan illustrates, with its seemingly contradictory presentation of direct speech and silence, poetic texts can provoke reflection on historiographical practice. Causation is one area in which this kind of enquiry can be profitable. As we have seen in this chapter, historiographical modes of causation manifest themselves in a range of ways in Roman epic, such as the causes of wars, the role of rumours and fame, concepts of historical processes such as moral decline, and the presentation of speeches. This might be considered to be one of a number of ways (there are others, such as battle narrative)[55] in which epic poetry, in any case an elevated genre, adds to its own status and importance by echoing the lofty practice of history.

[55] For a discussion of battle narrative in Statius, see Gibson (2008).

CHAPTER THREE

TOO CLOSE? HISTORIAN AND POET IN THE *APOCOLOCYNTOSIS*

Cynthia Damon

A scholar and an historian ought to be treated with respect.

Pédant maniaque.[1]

The *Apocolocyntosis* opens with an identity crisis. A speaker emerges to talk to an unidentified audience about a project he has in mind—*volo* is the main verb of the first sentence—but is challenged by an *alter ego* before he can get properly started on his material.[2] The first *ego* is a historian, the second an epic poet, and a behind-the-scene satirist pulls the strings to show us a mock battle for memory. Who gets to do the honors? Is historiography the right genre? Or epic? Neither? As it turns out, both narrative genres are deformed by the subject matter with which they are confronted in the work: the death and deification of Claudius. For this topic, the *Apocolocyntosis* suggests, we need satire, not history or poetry, and not memory but revenge.[3]

But revenge alone has never been a sufficient explanation for this satire. Indeed it has been impossible to identify any single purpose for the *Apocolocyntosis*, or even any single target. The work was topical at the time of its creation but remains readable. It is political but also literary, cruel but also educational, crude but also very very clever. Moreover,

[1] These references to Claudius come from Ronald Syme (1958) 1:436 and Jacques Heurgon (1953) 96 respectively. Both are somewhat tongue-in-cheek. The former alludes to Arnaldo Momigliano's book on Claudius, and Momigliano (1961) ix himself expresses Syme's real reaction thus: "an example of the natural and inevitable sympathy of a modern pedant for an ancient one." Heurgon's article argues against the attitude expressed by the words quoted here.

[2] The question of performance (if any) is not at issue here; the text operates in dramatic mode in the opening chapters. On performance of the original see Nauta (1987) 77–78.

[3] Cf. Weinreich (1923) 16: "Die so objektiv sich gebende Darstellung ist in Wahrheit durch und durch Tendenzschrift, persönliche Haßgesang."

it has been praised and pilloried with equal conviction. The praise is winning out over the pillory these days, however, and the work is being taken more and more seriously, with recent papers emphasizing the political and ethical significance underlying the ridicule of Claudius.[4] But whatever scholarly box we try to put the *Apocolocyntosis* into, it escapes to show readers a new facet. The present paper tries to catch the glint of one such facet: the deformation and defamation of historiography, so striking in a satire on the deification of an emperor who fancied himself a historian.[5]

1. *Fides penes auctorem erit*

That the satire fashions itself according to historiographical parameters has long been recognized.[6] The generic markers are many and various, and they are found throughout the work.[7] In the opening paragraph, with its statement of subject matter and purpose (1.1 *quid actum sit in caelo ... volo memoriae tradere*, "I wish to transmit to memory what

[4] See e.g. Braund and James (1998) on the significance of Claudius' bodily deformity; Osgood (2007) on Seneca's construction of "an ideal emperor negatively through derision" (p. 345); Nussbaum (2009) on the proto-Stoic quality of the work's laughter.

[5] Historiography was the occupation to which Claudius devoted himself when he found himself excluded because of his physical disabilities from the traditional elite career (see further section 2 below). Under Augustus and Tiberius, when his brother Germanicus was going from success to success, Claudius' public role was practically nil; Suetonius preserves some of his relatives' unflattering comments on Claudius (*Cl.* 3–5). Claudius held full membership in the senate under Gaius and served as consul with his nephew in AD 37 but is unlikely to have found much satisfaction in his new prominence, since Gaius made him a figure of fun (*Cl.* 7–8).

[6] The *Apocolocyntosis* text is that of Eden (1984) (except that consonantal u is replaced by v), unless otherwise noted.

[7] Comment usually focuses on the historiographical elements of paragraph 1, but there are also: a "last words" scene (4.3 *ultima vox eius*), an obituary (4.3 *omnia ... concacavit*), a second preface (5.1 *in caelo quae acta sint audite*), verbal markers of *enargeia* (6.2 *putares*, 12.1 *scires*), a methodological statement about the handling of speeches (9.2 *notarius persequi non potuit et ideo non refero, ne aliis verbis ponam quae ab illo dicta sunt*—a policy, as is so often the case, "more honor'd in the breach ..."), plus speeches both direct (Fever at 6.1, Claudius at 7.4–5, unknown god at 8.1–3, Janus at 9.3, Diespiter at 9.5, Augustus at 10.11–15) and indirect (5.2), and an *agon* concerning Claudius' punishment (14). Cf. also O'Gorman (2006) 99 on 6.1 (*itaque quod Gallum facere oportebit Romam cepit*): "This could well be a parodic sideswipe at the historical exemplum and its alleged usefulness." André (1998) and Ramelli (2001), which one might assume from their titles to be about passages such as these, focus instead on the *Apocolocyntosis* as a historical source.

happened in heaven"), and its declaration of impartiality (1.1 *nihil nec offensae nec gratiae dabitur*, "no concession will be made to either resentment or favor"), the historian's *persona* is consistently before us. And within this paragraph the all-important question of sources is particularly prominent.

The speaker is evasive at first: he may not respond, he says, to a question about how he knows what happened in heaven (1.1 *si quis quaesiverit unde sciam, primum, si noluero, non respondebo*). After all, he's a free man now: "Who's going to force me?" he says (1.1 *quis coacturus est?*). And we are warned off of trusting *any* response our speaker condescends to give when he tells us, "I'll say whatever occurs to me" (1.2 *dicam quod in buccam venerit*). For he is offended that we should even ask how he knows what he's telling us.[8] The implication of his next utterance—"Who ever demanded oath-bound witnesses from a historian?" (1.2 *quis umquam ab historico iuratores exegit*)—is that it is beneath the dignity of a historian to provide sworn evidence.

But our *historicus* does have a source, an *auctor*: the same man who witnessed the apotheosis of Gaius' much-loved sister Drusilla back in AD 38. "He will say that he saw Claudius en route" complete with the circumstantial detail "with unequal steps" (1.2 *idem Claudium vidisse se dicet iter facientem 'non passibus aequis'*). Again one senses evasion. Why "he will say that he saw" instead of just "he saw"? Furthermore, this *auctor* is remarkably coy: he will tell the story to one hearer, but refuses categorically to become an official witness (1.3). Why? Because no one believed his testimony about Drusilla (1.3). This "authority" is, as Ellen O'Gorman notes, "a debased Cassandra figure" ((2006) 102), a gossip, not a source of truth; he'll only tell you what you want to hear. Nevertheless, this is the source that our historian blithely makes the guarantor of the whole narrative to come: "whatever I myself heard from him I announce as doubt-free and definite" (1.3 *ab hoc ego quaecumque audivi certa clara affero*[9]). But then—evasive to the end on the subject of how he knows what he reports—the *historicus* offers a guarantee of truthfulness buttressed by a wish for his source's well-being, not his own:

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8 Eden (1984) ad loc. remarks aptly: "The idea that a reader would only accept a historian's word if his source's testimony was under oath is, of course, ludicrous. The author implies, with comic indignation, that he *is* a historian—and not a pseudohistorian, whose informant might readily be put on oath (cf. e.g. Lucian, *Toxaris* 11 and 18)."

9 Reading (with Lund (1994)) *quaecumque* from one branch of the tradition. Eden (1984) prints *quae tum* from the other branch, but the referent of *tum* is very unclear.

"so may I keep him safe and happy" (1.3 *ita illum salvum et felicem habeam*). The historian won't even feel it if he *is* lying.[10]

He supplies more details about his source than these, but even these are sufficiently surprising. In a lying history the source question can be dealt with far more efficiently. "I write about things that I did not see or experience, or hear about from others" suffices for Lucian's *True History*, for example.[11] And our speaker comes back to the subject a few paragraphs later when he turns from the death scene on earth (4.2) to the deification debate in heaven: after his solemn proclamation "What happened in heaven, hear ye" (5.1 *in caelo quae acta sint audite*), he adds—aside, as it were—"the guarantee will rest with my source" (*fides penes auctorem erit*). The satirist has neatly yoked content and form here by having the *historicus* use somebody else's words to deflect inquiry onto someone else, the *auctor*. For the phrase *fides penes auctorem erit* is lifted from Sallust's *Jugurtha* almost verbatim: apropos of the original inhabitants of Africa, when Sallust is about to give a story from the pre-Hercules mythical past (*Jug.* 18–19), he first disclaims responsibility with a phrase very like that of our *historicus* (*Jug.* 17.1 *fides eius rei penes auctores erit*).

What motivates this froth of concern about the source for what is self-evidently fiction? As it happens, we can make a reasonable guess. In a careful study of the terminology and events of official apotheoses during the empire's first three centuries,[12] Wilhelm Kierdorf points to the apotheosis of Claudius as setting a new pattern for both the order of events and the evidentiary basis for the senate's decree permitting consecration: "erstmals beim Tod des Claudius der Divinisierungsbeschluß des Senats *vor* dem *funus* gefaßt wurde; diese Neuerung war aber dadurch vorbereitet, daß schon bei der Apotheose der Livia kein Schwurzeuge mehr zur Bestätigung der Himmelfahrt bemüht wurde" ((1986) 61, emphasis original). The role of the "sworn witness" was to attest the ascent of the new god or goddess into heaven; such testimony was cited for

[10] Eden (1984) ad loc. paraphrases, "not 'my report is accurate, so help me God', but 'my report is accurate, may God help him.'" Commentators (e.g. Ball, Eden, Russo, Paolicchi) point out the allusion to the oath sworn by the witness of Drusilla's apotheosis, invoking destruction on himself and his children if his words were false (Dio. 59.11.4).

[11] *VH* 1.4. Other lying historians, it is true, go to the other extreme and fabricate documents and other kinds of evidence: see Weinreich (1923) 19–22 on the traditions of Lügengeschichte. The bibliography on this subject is now enormous.

[12] By Price's count ((1987) 57), in the roughly three centuries between the death of Augustus and the death of Constantine, "Thirty-six of the sixty emperors ... and twenty-seven members of their families were apotheosised."

Augustus in AD 14 (Suet. *Aug.* 100 *Nec defuit vir praetorius, qui se effigiem cremati euntem in caelum vidisse iuraret*) and, less successfully, as we have seen, for Drusilla in 38 (*Apoc.* 1.3, Dio 59.11.4), but not for Livia (whose death and cremation in 29 preceded her consecration in 41 by some 12 years), or for Claudius or the *divi* who followed him in the first and most of the 2nd century.[13] The deviation from the precedent of Augustus' obsequies—which Agrippina wanted Claudius' to rival, according to Tacitus (*Ann.* 12.69.3)—is striking.[14] After the Drusilla fiasco it must have been clear that the "sworn witness" procedure was problematic, indeed worthy of the ridicule heaped upon it here.[15] As we will see in part 4 below, however, the source-spoof serves a purpose beyond this immediate and political one.

2. *Refrigeratus ... a semet ipso*

With witness or without, Claudius arrives in heaven in paragraph 5. He isn't recognized, however, so Hercules is sent to gather particulars (5.3), which he attempts with a sort-of-Homeric greeting: "What man are you, and whence? what is your city like, and your parents?" (5.4; cf. *Od.* 1.170, etc., with πόθι τοι where Hercules says ποίη).[16] Claudius is delighted to find "literature-loving men" (5.4 *philologos homines*) in heaven, and "hopes that there will be some place for his histories" (*sperat futurum aliquem historiis suis locum*).[17] These histories must be as anomalous as

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[13] See also Price (1987) 73–77, who discusses the role of the witness in accounts of Romulus' apotheosis (e.g. Liv. 1.16.5–8, Ov. *Fast.* 2.481–512): "The circulation of the story in Augustus' lifetime made the use of a witness at Augustus' death seem obvious" (74). A comet like Caesar's was rare good luck.

[14] Kierdorf's analysis also makes sense of the satire's peculiar-seeming order of events: the heavenly debate on deification (paragraphs 8–11) comes before the funeral (paragraph 12) just as, in reality, the senatorial decree permitting consecration came before imperial funerals starting with Claudius. Of course the satirist collapses into a single day events that certainly took more time than that. Koster (1979) argues that an apotheosis scene has fallen out between 5.1 (the second proem) and 5.2 (the announcement of Claudius' arrival in heaven, where the missing antecedent of *se* is indeed odd). But some things are better left unsaid, and not only (as Weinreich (1923) ad loc. suggests) for reasons of brevity.

[15] Also, by omission, later in the work: the precedent of Drusilla's apotheosis is ignored by Diespiter, though he mentions those of Augustus and Livia in his speech in support of Claudius' candidacy (9.5).

[16] For discussion see Schmitzer (2000).

[17] Schmitzer (2000) 194 aptly remarks, apropos of Claudius' assumption, even after

their author, if they've found no fixed abode on earth: the *quasi-historiae* of a *quasi-homo*? So one might assume from the *Apocolocyntosis*.

Suetonius' two short paragraphs on the subject of Claudius' histories, however, are eloquent testimony to his efforts to display and establish his literary progeny (*Cl.* 41–42).[18] For example, Claudius gave public readings from his histories, both *in propria persona* (during his youth) and via readers (after he became emperor). Suetonius includes a lovely little anecdote about the young Claudius interrupting himself during his recitation and "repeatedly rendering himself tedious" (41 *refrigeratus saepe a semet ipso*).[19] And we can see that Claudius had plenty of historical material to choose from for these performances, since Suetonius tells us that, in addition to forty-three books on Roman history, he wrote twenty on the history of Etruria and eight on the history of Carthage, the latter two works in Greek, and a history of alphabets. The existence of other historical works, too, can be inferred from references elsewhere (see further below).

The Roman histories covered, in two books, an unknown period subsequent to Julius Caesar's assassination and, in forty-one books, a period starting *a pace civili*, "from the peace among citizens" (Suet. *Cl.* 41). We know much too little about these works, but the little we do know suggests that both struggled with the difficulty of telling the truth, that problem famously stated in Tacitus' blanket criticism of post-Actium histories—"truth was crippled in many ways" (*Hist.* 1.1.1 *veritas pluribus modis infracta*)—except that for Claudius the problem seems to start even earlier, with the civil wars of the triumviral period rather than with the civil peace.[20] His career as historian, which started with encouragement from Livy, met with frequent criticism from his mother Antonia and grandmother Livia (strong-minded women, both of them) on precisely this score. According to Suetonius, Claudius abandoned his narrative of the 40s BC "since he perceived no opportunity for writing freely or truthfully about these earlier events." (This of course implies that he felt he *could* write "freely and truthfully" (*libere atque vere*) about Augustus' reign, but Tacitus' pronouncement (and indeed common sense) suggests that the reality was rather different.)

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hearing him misquote Homer, that Hercules is a *philologus homo*, "er sich als realitätsblind entlarvt."

[18] Momigliano (1961) 6–19 discusses Claudius' learned writings.

[19] A behavior also evident in the Lyon Tablet, as many have observed.

[20] The anxiety about *veritas* is also visible in Seneca's comment on the history of the civil war and early imperial years written by his father: the period was one in which "truth backed away" (Sen. fr. 97 Vottero *veritas retro abiit*).

As for the Greek works, we know that they, at least, got regular airings, since Suetonius tells us that Claudius built a new Museum in Alexandria and required that one of these works be performed in the old Museum and one in the new *quotannis*, "every single year."

To judge by Tacitus' fragmentary account of Claudius' principate, the histories also got irregular airings in Claudius' speeches and edicts and spectacles; as Syme (1958) 706 put it in connection with Claudius' additions to the patrician *gentes*, but also with more general reference, "the head of the *gens Claudia* was never reluctant to obtrude his scholarship." The history of Augustus' principate, for example, might have provided material for many a speech announcing policies in which Claudius was following Augustan precedents: the Secular Games (Suet. *Cl.* 21 *ipse in historiis suis prodat intermissos eos* [sc. *ludos*] *Augustum … in ordinem redegisse*; cf. Tac. *Ann.* 11.11.1 *utriusque principis rationes*, referring to Augustus and Claudius[21]), the creation of new patrician families (11.25.2 *Augustus lege Saenia*[22]), Parthian policy (12.11.1 *incipit orationem Caesar … seque divo Augusto adaequabat*), the expansion of the pomerium (12.23.2 *more prisco … et divus Augustus*), and a naval spectacle (12.56.1 *ut quondam Augustus*). The Augustan history might also have given him something to say when, early in his principate, he proposed to the senate that Augustus' wife Livia be consecrated (Suet. *Cl.* 11 *decernenda curavit*, Dio 60.5.2).[23] Syme detects references to Claudius' Etruscan books in Tacitus' account of Claudius' proposal to organize the *haruspices* (whose lore came from Etruria) into a collegium (*Ann.* 11.15.4).[24] And the edict

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[21] On the relationship between model and imitation in this particular connection, however, see note 55 below.

[22] Claudius' researches may be the source of Tacitus' information about the otherwise unknown *lex Saenia* by means of which Augustus created his new patricians. Augustus doesn't mention this *lex* in his *Res Gestae* (8.1): *patriciorum numerum auxi consul quintum iussu populi et senatus*; see Syme (1958) 2:706.

[23] It will also, of course, have given extra piquancy to the *Apocolocyntosis*' long condemnatory speech by Augustus (*Apoc.* 10–11.5), particularly Augustus' protest that Claudius has been "hiding under [his] name" (10.4 *sub meo nomine latens*).

[24] Also in the digression on the Caelian Hill (so-called in honor of the Etruscan general Caele Vibenna; Tac. *Ann.* 4.65). See Syme's Appendices 40–41 ((1958) 703–710) for a fuller list of possible citations of Claudius' writings. Most are not attributable to any of Claudius' known titles, but even where the precise source (if it was even written) eludes us we get the impression that Claudius publicized his antiquarian researches proudly on topics as various as the origins of Rome's magistracies (*Ann.* 11.22; possibly 6.11), the custom of asylum in Greece (12.61), Rome's pomerium (12.23–24), the history of alphabets and laws (11.14, 3.26), the expansion of Roman citizenship (11.24), the cycle of the Secular Games (11.11), the definition of incest (12.8.2; cf. 12.6.3), Rome's Trojan

introducing his three new letters may have been presented together with justifications drawn from Claudius' history of the alphabet (Suet. *Cl.* 41 *de quarum* [sc. *litterarum*] *ratione cum privatus adhuc volumen edidisset, mox princeps non difficulter obtinuit ut in usu quoque promiscuo essent*; cf. Tac. *Ann.* 11.14.3 *quo exemplo*—referring to "new" letters in other alphabets—*Claudius tres litteras adiecit*). It seems safe to say, in modern parlance, that Claudius self-identified as a historian.

Seneca, however, did not so identify, despite parental precedent and despite the lead supplied by Claudius, whose writing of history Seneca praised in his plea for a pardon in AD 43, the *consolatio ad Polybium*.[25] Seneca urged the talented imperial freedman Polybius to chronicle the deeds of Claudius "who will supply both the material and the model of how best to structure and compose history" (8.2 *ipse tibi optime formandi condendique res gestas et materiam dabit et exemplum*), but Seneca showed no inclination to write this chronicle himself.[26] In fact history was one of the few genres left untried by this polygeneric author, even though it was *the* traditional genre for Roman statesmen in their golden (or not so golden) years.

Which is not to say that Seneca did not see knowledge of history as a worthwhile acquisition during Claudius' principate. Alain Gowing points to an interesting discrepancy between works written by Seneca under Claudius and those written under Nero, with historical (specifically Republican) *exempla* prominent in the former, and noticeably less so in the latter ((2005) 70). Later in life Seneca was criticized for increasing his poetic output because of Nero's taste for verse (Tac. *Ann.* 14.52.3); whether or not there is any truth to the charge, or to what it suggests about the distribution of his historical *exempla*, we can see that under Claudius there were all kinds of reasons for a talented writer who was attuned to contemporary taste (*Ann.* 13.3.1 *ingenium amoenum et temporibus eius auribus accommodatum*) and possessed of an agreeable character (*Ann.* 13.2.1 *comitate honesta*) to try his hand at historiography.

But no, no history, contemporary or antiquarian, from Seneca's pen. Seneca's indictment of the genre, already suggested by the parody of

origin (Suet. *Cl.* 25.3), the fetial formula (Suet. *Cl.* 25.5), dice games (Suet. *Cl.* 33.2), and solar eclipses (Dio 60.26). On his penchant for identifying historical firsts see note 59 below.

[25] For the elder Seneca's history see note 20 above.

[26] Rudich (1987) views the Claudius-abusing *Apocolocyntosis* as, in part, a palinode to the Claudius-flattering *Consolatio*. He does not mention the historiographical link between the two works, but it parallels the other links he discusses.

historiographical markers discussed in part 1 above, is the subject of part 4 below, but for now let us delve a little more deeply into the treatment of historiography in his satire on Claudius.

3. *Historia … proxima poetis*

Many of the parodic techniques discussed above can also be found in other ancient (and indeed modern) spoofs of historiography. But the *Apocolocyntosis* possesses one unusual—perhaps unique—vein of satire: it uses a poet to pan its *historicus*.[27]

Historian and poet vie for the floor in the work's opening paragraphs. "I wish to transmit to memory what happened in heaven," begins the historian. But before he can move beyond his prefatory material—the discussion of bias and sources—to the narrative proper, in chimes a poet with the opening of *his* narrative, six hexameter lines on the season in which the satire's events occur, namely, late autumn (2.1.1–6, quoted below). Then, before the poet in his turn can get to the main event—Claudius' death—the historian attacks with a date (2.2, also quoted below). But *he* loses the advantage of this nicely timed interjection by dithering over details: the hour, clocks, philosophers, blah blah blah (2.2). Back comes the poet. "Too dull!" he says, *nimis rustice!* offering instead three hexameters on the time of day (2.3–4). The poet, however, succeeds no better than the historian at getting to the point:

> iam medium curru Phoebus diviserat orbem
> et propior Nocti fessas quatiebat harenas
> obliquo flexam deducens tramite lucem.
>
> Already Phoebus had divided his circular track in half with his chariot and, closer to Night, was shaking his tired reins, drawing down bent light on slantwise path.

Whatever that means. To our relief, the historian leaps in to announce the beginning of the event that both authors claim as their material: "Claudius begins to gasp out his life" (2.4 *Claudius animam agere coepit*).

The pace of the verbal jostling slows in the new venue of paragraph 3, but the competition for the floor is still apparent. We are now in the House of the Fates, the Parcae, and the historian gets a paragraph to

[27] One could also look at how the historian pans the poet—how, for example, perfectly good poetic material such as a council of the gods and a katabasis was being deformed by its prose medium—but that is a topic for another paper.

himself, in which he reports a conversation between Mercury and Clotho. The poet, for his part, gets an uninterrupted run of lines in paragraph 4 before the historian brings us back, in the second part of the paragraph, to the *hic et nunc* of Rome on 13 October 54. The poet got in first with the punch line on Claudius' death: "she—that is Clotho—broke off the royal period of a dullard's life" (4.1.2 *abrupit stolidae regalia tempora vitae*). But after he follows this up with a bunch of irrelevant and tedious, not to say obsequious, verses on Nero, the historian does well to repeat this vital information in his own idiom at the paragraph's end: "he—that is Claudius—gurgled out his soul" (4.2 *animam ebulliit*).

And idiom is crucial here. In these larger panels the two genres begin to self-destruct. In the historian's two sections, for example, elements of verse infiltrate the historical narrative even though the poet himself is silent. The historian quotes verse, for example. This was something he had already done back in paragraph 1, where he applied Virgil's "with unequal steps" not, pathetically, to Iulus' little steps next to his father's big ones, but, ridiculously, to Claudius' limp (1.2 *non passibus aequis*; cf. Virg. *Aen*. 2.274). But in this section there is more: a line on bees from *Georgics* 4, and, in the historian's part of paragraph 4, a line from a lost play of Euripides.[28] (Seneca of course uses verse quotations throughout his prose writings, but here the verse fragments are worked seamlessly into the prose syntax rather than being presented as literary or philosophical ornaments for the text.[29])

More important is the infiltration of poetic *content* into the historical narrative of paragraph 3, with its conversation about snipping the thread of Claudius' miserable life. Mercury takes Clotho aside—*seducit*—and browbeats her into doing a favor for his protégé, Claudius. An obvious parallel, in verse, is Ovid on the apotheosis of Julius Caesar, which includes a scene where Venus bends the ear of every divinity she can get hold of, trying to wheedle a favor for *her* protégé, Caesar. (The *Metamorphoses* is mentioned as *the* appropriate venue for apotheosis tales at

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[28] On quotations in the *Apocolocyntosis* see Courtney (1962) 91–92, Maugeri (1985, with p. 69 for *dede neci* in particular), and O'Gorman (2006).

[29] Compare, for example, the presentation of a Virgil tag at *Ep*. 84.3: *Apes, ut aiunt, debemus imitari, quae vagantur et flores ad mel faciendum idoneos carpunt, deinde quidquid attulere disponunt ac per favos digerunt et, ut Vergilius noster ait, 'liquentia mella / stipant et dulci distendunt nectare cellas.'* In the satire Seneca comes closer to achieving the ideal articulated in that same letter (84.7): *Hoc faciat animus noster: omnia quibus est adiutus abscondat, ipsum tantum ostendat quod effecit.*

9.5.[30]) In both scenes the decrees of the Fates play a prominent role. The satirist's Clotho responds to Mercury's seduction with a willingness to please that belies everything we've ever heard about their *ferrea decreta*. She was planning, she says, to keep Claudius alive until he made Roman citizens of all remaining provincials, "but since the decision is that there should be some foreigners left for future crops, and since you order this to be done, so be it" (3.3 *sed quoniam placet peregrinos in semen fieri et tu ita iubes fieri, fiat*). Not much iron-clad here. In Ovid's scene, however, the fixity of fate is mentioned three times, most strikingly in Jupiter's response to Venus' solicitation. And in it he takes her, at least in imagination, into the dwelling of the Fates in which our *historicus* set his conversation between Mercury and Clotho (*Met.* 15.807–810, 813–814):

> talibus hanc genitor: 'sola insuperabile fatum,
> nata, movere paras? intres licet ipsa sororum
> tecta trium; cernes illic molimine vasto
> ex aere et solido rerum tabularia ferro …
> invenies illic incisa adamante perenni
> fata tui generis.

> Said father to daughter as follows: "All by yourself, child, do you undertake to move invincible fate? Suppose you enter the very house of the three sisters: you will see there the archive of history with its vast mass of bronze and solid iron … you will find there the destiny of your race carved in eternal adamant …"[31]

But we don't need to go as far as the *Metamorphoses* to see that the prose of paragraph 3 shares content with verse.[32] For the verses in paragraph 4 extend the narrative of the conversation in the House of the Parcae, where Mercury gets his way with Clotho, bringing in Clotho's sister Lachesis (4.1.3 *at Lachesis*), who is similarly accommodating to Apollo.[33] As the *historicus*, who completes the poet's tale, tells us: the poet's Apollo says,

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[30] The solicitation scene is reprised at 9.6 where Hercules tries to rustle up votes in the heavenly senate. For more parallels between the *Apocolocyntosis* and the *Metamorphoses* ("non solo nella poesia ma anche nella prosa") see Roncali (1988) 286–287 (quotation from p. 287).

[31] Cf. *Met.* 15.781 *ferrea … decreta sororum*, 15.799 *ventura … fata*.

[32] The point could be made with other passages in the satire as well. See Binder (1974) for parallels between Virgil's Cacus/Hercules scene and the satirist's Claudius/Hercules scene in paragraph 5 ("Die Hercules-Claudius-Szene enthüllt sich als ein Stück Epenparodie in Prosa," p. 316), or Ball (1902) ad loc. on the comic Hercules of paragraph 6 (before he turns *tragicus* in the verse of paragraph 7), or Binder (1991) for comedic elements in the finale. For examples of even broader overlap see note 27 above.

[33] Champlin (2003) argues that much of paragraph 4 is a later interpolation: "Everything after the second verse in 4.1 (*abrupit stolidae regalia tempora vitae*), and before the

"let him—that is, Nero—surpass the timespan of a mortal life" (4.1.21 *vincat mortalis tempora vitae*), a wish that is gratified by the historian's "Lachesis, for her part, made this happen with generous hand—she too was partial to a good-looking fella—and gave Nero many years of her own" (4.2 *at Lachesis, quae et ipsa homini formosissimo faveret, fecit illud plena manu et Neroni multos annos de suo donat*). And to emphasize the blending here the historian is made to reprise the poet's opening words, *at Lachesis*. Cicero tells us that it was customary for eulogies to be presented in both prose and verse, but it seems unlikely that the funeral laudations he has in mind involved the kind of interplay we see in this funeral satire.[34] It is beginning to look like the pressure of the subject matter—Claudius' death and deification—is producing a generic monstrosity.[35]

Perhaps the most striking evidence of the work's generic travails is the way its poetry and prose compete to say the same thing. The presence of semantic doublets is announced early—just after the poet's first intervention—and introduced with what looks like a guide to their interpretation. As we saw earlier, the poet takes the floor unannounced, silencing the *historicus* and his source discussion. He opens with a leisurely six-hexameter identification of the chronological setting of Claudius' death (2.1.1–6):

> Iam Phoebus breviore via contraxerat arcum
> lucis et obscuri crescebant tempora Somni,
> iamque suum victrix augebat Cynthia regnum,
> et deformis Hiems gratos carpebat honores
> divitis Autumni, iussoque senescere Baccho
> carpebat raras serus vindemitor uvas.

> Phoebus had already drawn in his light's curving path with a shorter route and the time of dark Sleep was growing longer; Cynthia, victorious, was already increasing her domain, while ugly Winter was gathering the welcome glories of wealthy Autumn, and, now that Bacchus had been ordered to age, the late harvester was picking the few remaining grapes.

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middle of 4.2 (*Et ille quidem animam ebulliit . . .*) can just be removed" (p. 280). The argument of the present paper is not chronology-dependent.

34 Cic. *Leg.* 2.62 *sunt in more: . . . ut . . . honoratorum virorum laudes in contione memorentur, easque etiam ut cantus ad tibicinem prosequatur cui nomen neniae*. For a glimpse at the infiltration of historiography into the satire's verse, consider the anapaestic *nenia* of paragraph 12, into which the satirist has squeezed Claudius' *res gestae*—particularly his conquest of Britain, complete with chained and law-abiding Brigantae. This material was at least as suitable for a historian's obituary as for a lament, if not more so.

35 Courtney (1962) argues that this blending is a feature of Menippean satire generally. What makes each satire distinctive is the set of genres blended and the proportions

In response to the divinities in heaven and the personified seasons on earth (and the bizarre blend of the two in *iusso ... senescere Baccho*), the *historicus* crisply offers a date, telling us in advance that his version is better: "I think it more intelligible if I say the month was October, the date three days before the Ides" (2.2 *puto magis intellegi si dixero: mensis erat October, dies III idus Octobris*).[36] His criterion for "better," intelligibility, also favors his version of the time of day—"between the sixth and seventh hours" (2.2)—over the poet's three baffling hexameters on the heavenly location of Phoebus' chariot (2.4 quoted above, and introduced with "Are you going to pass up so fine an hour?").[37] Likewise, later in the satire when a prose "Cerberus" is set alongside a poetic "hundred-headed monster" (13.3 *belua centiceps*, borrowed from Horace), another of the historian's verse quotations.

But prose doesn't always come out on top in these matchups. When Mercury asks Clotho to end Claudius' suffering, for example, the prose (and indeed prosaic) "do what has to be done" (3.2 *fac quod faciendum est*) is less precise, less intelligible even, than the Virgil tag immediately following: "give him over to death" (3.2 *dede neci*).

And sometimes there is no clear winner, at least on the criterion of intelligibility.[38] There are six versions of the question "Where are you from?" in the satire:

> he had asked what nation [Claudius] belonged to (5.2 *quaesisse se cuius nationis esset*)
> to investigate what part of humankind he belonged to (5.3 *explorare quorum hominum esset*)
> "What man are you, and whence? what is your city like, and your parents?" (5.4 τίς πόθεν εἷς ἀνδρῶν, ποίη πόλις ἠδὲ τοκῆες;)

thereof. Where Petronius' *Satyricon* parodies the conventions of the novel, for instance, the *Apocolocyntosis* privileges historiography.

[36] One needn't accept his definition of 'better', however. Weinreich (1937) sets this passage in a context of similar restatements that favor the poetic versions. O'Gorman (2006) gives specifics: "What does the verse give us to understand about the date of Claudius' death? The seasonal imagery of these six lines conveys darkness, deformity, limitation and belatedness—how much of this is 'circumlocution', speaking *around* the point, or is it speaking precisely to the point of Claudius' reign and death, a point which cannot be understood simply from the statement of a calendar date?" (p. 101, emphasis original).

[37] In full 2.3 reads: ⟨*Adeo his*⟩ *adquiescunt omnes poetae, non contenti ortus et occasus describere ut etiam medium diem inquietent, tu sic transibis horam tam bonam?*

[38] For deconstruction of another of the work's apparent value criteria, truthfulness (5.4 *verior*), see O'Gorman (2006) 97–100.

"Divulge quickly in what abode you claim to have been born!" (7.2.1 *exprome propere sede qua genitus cluas*)
"What fatherland, what people reared your ever-moving head? Discourse!" (7.2.5–6 *quae patria, quae gens mobile eduxit caput? / edissere*)
"Is that land your life's nurse?" (7.2.14 *estne illa tellus spiritus altrix tui?*)

All six versions communicate clearly, although they differ in language (Greek vs. Latin), pedigree (Homer vs. Seneca), syntax (direct quotation vs. paraphrase), and most notably, tone, with paragraph 7's three poetic versions in Latin being (predictably) more elevated than their prose equivalents in paragraph 5 (there are no Greek prose versions).[39] The same tonal distinction can be seen in other competing descriptions. Of the extra years allotted to Nero, for example. According to the *historicus*, Lachesis "gave many of her own years" (4.2 *multos annos de suo donat*). According to the poet (4.1.19–20):

plus solito nevere manus humanaque fata
laudatum transcendit opus

More than their wont her hands spun, and their lauded work surpassed human fates.

Or Claudius' voice: in prose, "with troubled sound and voice confused" (5.2 *perturbato sono et voce confusa*), in verse, "with voice's utterance uncertain" (7.2.4 *profatu vocis incerto*). Or a demand for information: in prose, "quickly now, the truth" (7.1 *citius … verum*), in verse "Divulge!" (7.2.1 *exprome*) and "Discourse!" (7.2.6 *edissere*). Or Claudius' first punishment in the underworld, the runaway dice: in prose, "the ever-fleeing pieces" (14.4 *fugientes semper tesseras*), in verse, "the deceitful die slipped off with assiduous thievery" (15.1.6 *fallax adsiduo dilabitur alea furto*). If these verses seem ridiculously pompous, it's probably because the general context is resolutely low.[40] But most of them are perfectly *intelligible*.

Two of the semantic equivalents are particularly interesting. The first concerns one of the answers to that persistent question, "Where are

[39] Among the "elevated" elements of the Latin poetic version are recherché vocabulary (*cluas*, *edissere*, *altrix*) and imaginative figures (*exprome*, *eduxit*). Note also the ring-composition (reinforced by alliteration) of *exprome … edissere*. For the tragic elements of the speech as a whole, and the borrowings from Senecan tragedy in particular, see the commentaries, esp. Weinreich (1923).

[40] Cf. Eden (1984) ad loc.: "All the features of *Hercules tragicus* are here. The parody results from the situation he is put in, and the situation he describes: the style suits a superman confronting a monster, not a coward bullying a defenceless paralytic."

you from?" Claudius is from Gaul, and specifically from Lyon, as Fever insists (6.1):

> Luguduni natus est, Munati municipem vides. quod tibi narro, ad sextum decimum lapidem natus est a Vienna … hunc ego tibi recipio Luguduni natum, ubi Licinus multis annis regnavit.
>
> He was born at Lyon. You see Munatius' fellow-citizen. I tell you, he was born at the sixteenth milestone from Vienne. I guarantee you that he was born at Lyon, where Licinus ruled for many a year.

She names the place twice, and adds three qualifiers: it's where Munatius gave people citizenship, where Licinus was king, and sixteen miles from Vienne.[41] (She later adds that it's on the Rhône, a long way from the Xanthus: 6.2). Hercules (to whom she is speaking here) comes back with his own description of Lyon once he has turned *tragicus* (7.2.12–16):

> vidi duobus imminens fluviis iugum,
> quod Phoebus ortu semper obverso videt,
> ubi Rhodanus ingens amne praerapido fluit,
> Ararque, dubitans quo suos cursus agat,
> tacitus quietis adluit ripas vadis.
>
> I saw looming over two rivers the ridge that Phoebus aslant at his rising always sees, where flows the vast Rhone with its so-rapid stream and the Saône (hesitating whither to betake his course) washes silent the banks with waters calm.

Here, instead of social and political and practical details we get a ridge, the rising sun, and two rivers (one flowing fast, one slow; one powerful, one personified). It's all very fine, as befits a speaker in tragic mode.[42] But here again intelligibility is an inadequate metric. *Both* descriptions of Lyon shed light on the character of the city's most illustrious alumnus. Like Munatius, Claudius made citizens, and like Licinus, he wielded royal power. (We could also say, pushing things a little, that he was miles away from normal.) But he's also like Hercules' vision: looming, destructive,

[41] L. Munatius Plancus was the founder of the colony at Lugdunum in the 40s BC, Licinus an imperial procurator under Augustus. *Munati* is an emendation for the archetype's *marci*. Other editors print other emendations, and Roncali (1990) retains *Marci* (an allusion to Marcus Antonius; see Eden (1984) ad loc.). For my purposes the word *municipem* is more important.

[42] According to Pliny the younger, descriptions of places can be done either "in the historian's manner" or "in the poet's" (*Ep.* 2.2.5 *nam descriptiones locorum … non historice tantum sed prope poetice prosequi fas est*), and are a treat for young ears (ibid. *sunt enim quaedam adulescentium auribus danda, praesertim si materia non refragetur; nam descriptiones locorum …*).

and clueless. If he's not silent, too, like the Saône, he might as well be given the difficulty of understanding what he says (5.2).

The second particularly interesting set of verse and prose equivalents concerns the purpose of punishment in the underworld. When trying to settle on something appropriate for the now-convicted Claudius, Aeacus' advisors first argue over several specific proposals (14.3: relieve Sisyphus of his stone, give Tantalus a break for refreshment, take over for Ixion with the wheel), then, unable to agree, compromise with a general principle: "they needed to come up with a useless task for him and hope of some fulfillment but not the thing itself" (14.4 *excogitandum illi laborem irritum et alicuius cupiditatis spem sine effectu*). Whereupon Aeacus comes up with the runaway dice. The poet, as we have seen, gives his own version of the dice, but also of the purpose behind it. Where the *historicus* reporting the *agon* used abstract ideas (*labor*, *cupiditas*, *spes*, *effectus*), the poet uses a simile (15.1.6–7):

> Sic cum iam summi tanguntur culmina montis,
> irrita Sisyphio volvantur pondera collo.
>
> Thus when the furthest slopes of the mountaintop are reached the useless burden rolls off the Sisyphean neck.

This is the kind of colorful restatement that Seneca himself will later deploy when trying to communicate philosophical doctrine in his *Letters to Lucilius*.[43] Finally, here at the end of the satire, the two idioms complement one another instead of competing. But the satisfaction is shortlived, for they are both swept away abruptly when the shade of Gaius shows up to claim Claudius as his slave and consign him to a desk job as underling to a freedman (15.2).

These passages where poet and *historicus* offer competing expressions of a single idea extend the generic jostling of the second paragraph through to the end of the work. The point, perhaps, is that there is no single genre, no single voice appropriate for the subject matter at hand. Greater intelligibility is no real virtue, since the material was in many ways nonsensical. Greater elevation was not appropriate, despite solemn themes like death and divinity, Olympus and Hades—again, the specifics were against it. What better strategy for the satirist than to bring the

[43] On Seneca's enrichment of prose via images see Armisen-Marchetti (1989). She notes that the *Apocolocyntosis* is, by comparison with other Senecan works, poor in images: "Leur rareté dans *l'Apocoloquintose*, coïncidant avec l'absence de préoccupations philosophiques, confirme que métaphores et comparaisons trouvent leur terrain d'élection dans les pages de direction de conscience" (p. 339).

generic squabble before our eyes? This paper has focused on historiography, but the rather extensive set of parallel passages just considered perhaps permits extrapolation: the competition and cooperation between historiography and poetry is one of the satirist's techniques for deforming both types of narrative when the content is not worthy of history *or* verse.[44]

4. *Fabularum memoria*

It is worth noting, however, that all of this highly enjoyable mockery also sends up a highly effective smokescreen. I mean, where's the mushroom? Everybody's heard about the mushroom that killed Claudius. One of Nero's best jokes depends on it: mushrooms, mmm, "food for the gods," he said (Suet. *Ner.* 33.1, Dio 60.35.4). But the *Apocolocyntosis* versions of the death scene leave little room for a mushroom and, more importantly, none at all for Agrippina. First, there's the scene in the House of the Parcae where Clotho snips Claudius' life thread to ingratiate herself with a good-looking Mercury, who has taken pity on Claudius (4.1.2). And then there's the historian's real-world statement just before Claudius' famous last words: "he breathed his last while a comedy was playing" (4.2 *expiravit … dum comoedos audit*). "When" Claudius died is overdetermined in this work—in the afternoon of the 13th of October during the harvest season of the new year at the beginning of a happy reign while he was listening to a comedy in his sixty-fourth year (3.1)—but "how" he died is left unsaid.[45]

The point of the opening announcement of the historian's subject matter—*quid actum sit in caelo*—is becoming clearer: the heavenly plane of paragraphs 3 and 4 distracts attention from sordid goings-on back on earth.[46] In other sources on Claudius' death scene the details are

[44] Cf. O'Gorman (2006) 100 n. 10: "the apparent elevation of history at the expense of poetry … is only half of Seneca's story."

[45] The historian's fretful aside here—"now you know that I have reason to fear those players," he says (4.2 *ut scias me non sine causa illos* [sc. *comoedos*] *timere*)—suggests that bad acting not bad eating was the cause of death.

[46] It is as though the satirist has taken Eumolpus' advice about historical epic and applied it to historical prose (Petr. *Sat.* 118.6): *Non enim res gestae versibus comprehendendae sunt, quod longe melius historici faciunt, sed per ambages deorumque ministeria et fabulosum sententiarum tormentum praecipitandus est liber spiritus, ut potius furentis animi vaticinatio appareat quam religiosae orationis sub testibus fides.* As Eumolpus observes, *fides* is beside the point in such a narrative.

reported variously, but, as Suetonius says, "it is agreed that he died by poison" (*Cl.* 44 *veneno … occisum convenit*).[47] The other sources also agree on Agrippina's ultimate responsibility for the murder. (The truth of the matter is beyond our reach, but the tradition preserved in these other sources is eloquent testimony to a refusal to believe the official version, true or not.[48]) The only elements of their version that make it into the *Apocolocyntosis* are the time of death (afternoon) and the *comoedi*, and our "historian" seems to get it wrong on both counts. Or, more precisely, he presents as fact what Suetonius and Tacitus consider to be fiction; despite variations of detail, both accounts assert that the palace rescripted the timing of events on the fateful day.[49] According to Suetonius, the *comoedi* were summoned that morning "for Claudius' amusement" (Suet. *Cl.* 45 *qui … oblectarent*). But Claudius was already dead by then, having died *prope lucem*, "just before dawn" (Suet. *Cl.* 44; cf. Dio 60.34.3 "during the night").[50] That is, the *comoedi* were part of an elaborate ruse to conceal the time of death until the details of Nero's succession could be worked out.[51] The senate and magistrates were fooled for long enough to issue pointless prayers for the dead emperor's recovery (Tac. *Ann.* 12.68.1 *vocabatur interim senatus votaque pro incolumitate principis consules et sacerdotes nuncupabant*; Suet. *Cl.* 45 *quasi pro aegro adhuc vota suscepta sunt*). The official time of death seems to have been, as the satirist puts it, "between the sixth and seventh hour," i.e., just after noon (*Apoc.* 2.2; cf. Suet. *Ner.* 8 *inter horam sextam septimamque*, Tac. *Ann.* 12.69.1 *medio diei*). And that's the point, really: the satire, for all of its irreverence, gives the official version of Claudius' death. Or at least the official official version. The famous quip of Seneca's brother Gallio about

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[47] The basic sources for the death scene are: Tac. *Ann.* 12.66–67, Suet. *Cl.* 44, and Dio 60.34.2–3. According to Hurley (2001) 236, "the fact that S[uetonius] gives alternative versions of both poisoning and death suggests that the stories were contrived and that details about the administration of poison and the need for a second dose evolved to support an assumption of foul play."

[48] According to Tacitus the "truth" about the mushroom and Agrippina's responsibility was known very soon (12.67.1 *adeoque cuncta mox pernotuere, ut temporum illorum scriptores prodiderint infusum delectabili boleto venenum …*, etc.).

[49] The surviving epitome of Dio's version (60.34) is very brief: just the mushroom, Agrippina's responsibility, and the timing ("during the night"). Nothing about the orchestration of Nero's ascension.

[50] In Tacitus' account the pretense involves not *comoedi* but clothing and medicating the dead man (12.68.1): *cum iam exanimis vestibus et fomentis obtegeretur*.

[51] Cf. Waltz (1966) 21 n. 4 on Fever, "who alone … had accompanied [Claudius]" to heaven (6.1 *quae … sola cum illo venerat*): "allusion probable à la version officielle de la morte de Claude, qui devrait attribuer son décès à la fièvre."

Claudius' deification—that "they hauled him to heaven on a hook" (Dio 60.35.4)—if genuine, suggests that, underneath the official *pietas*, humor was bubbling away from the beginning.[52]

If we were to try to extract from the *Apocolocyntosis* a critique of historiography as it grapples with the death and deification of Claudius, it would go something like this: unworthy content plus unreliable sources plus irresponsible author plus political pressure equals farce. This critique is context-specific: Seneca has made the genre a crucial element of his satire. That is, historiography is one of the things—along with physical disabilities, obliviousness, subservience to freedmen, and fondness for judicial murder, Homeric quips, and dicing—that makes Claudius Claudius.[53] It will be worthwhile, however, to broaden the focus and look briefly at what Seneca has to say elsewhere about historiography.[54]

The phrase that caps that spoof of the *historicus*' use of sources in the *Apocolocyntosis*, *fides penes auctorem erit*, reappears in a more general critique of historiography in Seneca's work on natural history written a decade or so later, the *Natural Questions* (4.3.1):

> quod historici faciunt et ipse faciam: illi cum multa mentiti sunt ad arbitrium suum, unam aliquam rem nolunt spondere, sed adiciunt 'penes auctores fides erit.'
>
> I too will do as the historians do: when they have told as many lies as they please, they balk at taking responsibility for some fact or other, offering instead "the guarantee will rest with my sources."

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[52] Later versions of the story read ridicule back into the official events (e.g. Plin. *Pan.* 11.1 *dicavit caelo … Claudium Nero sed ut irrideret*; Dio. 60.35.2 "Agrippina and Nero pretended to mourn the man they had killed, and raised to heaven the man they had carried out of a dinner-party on a litter"), on what basis is unclear. For a discussion of the community-building function of the satire's humor in the context of the imperial court at the beginning of Nero's reign see Nauta (1987) 90–96. For the *Apocolocyntosis* as a virtual palinode for the official celebration of Claudius' virtues and Seneca's contribution thereto see e.g. Blänsdorf (1986) 8–9. According to Suetonius, Claudius' divine honors received lukewarm official support (*Cl.* 45 *honorem a Nerone destitutum abolitumque recepit mox per Vespasianum*; cf. *Vesp.* 9.1 *fecit … templum … Divique Claudi in Caelio monte, coeptum quidem ab Agrippina, sed a Nerone prope funditus destructum*), but he leaves the timing quite vague.

[53] The work is selective in its mockery of Claudian shortcomings. Among those that attract criticism in other sources are: his uxoriousness (and the crimes of both Messalina and Agrippina), the muzzling of Corbulo and military ambition more generally, the presentation of Secular Games at an unduly short interval after Augustus' Games, the new letters foisted on the Roman alphabet, his purging of the senate as censor, and the succession problem and rivalry within the imperial family. More could be listed.

[54] This large topic gets more thorough scrutiny elsewhere: e.g. Kühnen (1962), Castagna (1991).

The scientist's point is that historians who use this device disavow responsibility for *una aliqua res* without giving any *bona fides* for the rest of their material. His generalization "when they have told as many lies as they please" strikes one as rather harsh for the only historian we know to have used the phrase, namely Sallust, but gives strong expression to a distrust of historians' *bona fides*.[55]

The *Natural Questions*, along with the *Letters to Lucilius*, late works both, contain Seneca's most extensive criticism of historiography. In the programmatic preface of Book 3 of the *Natural Questions* (originally the work's first book), for example, "Seneca is … rejecting historiography as a literary and intellectual pursuit in favour of philosophy" (Hine (2006) 50). And in *Letter* 88, where Seneca gives his views on the liberal arts, history is categorized as branch of *grammatice*, the first of the liberal arts, and then all of the liberal arts are dismissed ("they are our schooling, not our work" *Ep.* 88.1 *rudimenta sunt nostra, non opera*). Historiography is here designated, slightingly, "a record of stories" (88.3 *fabularum memoria*).[56] But Seneca's rejection of history is not just a product of his late devotion to philosophy. Even in an earlier work, *On the shortness of life*, history gets a poor recommendation.[57]

Here Seneca attacks historiography as practiced in his day rather than a particular event (as in the *Apocolocyntosis*) or the genre's essence (as in the late works). That is, he addresses the kind of history that a Claudius was writing and foisting on audiences via recitation. It's a vigorous attack, too, as was Seneca's wont when countering literary opponents.[58] "A useless expenditure of energy!" (13.8 *supervacua … diligentia*). Its con-

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[55] After Seneca's day Pliny the elder uses it in his *Natural History* (17.93). Suetonius preserves an example of unreliable histories with special relevance to Claudius, who wrote "in his histories" that Augustus' date for Secular Games was correct (*Cl.* 21 *ipse in historiis suis prodat … Augustum diligentissime annorum ratione subducta in ordinem redegisse*), but celebrated his own games on the basis of a different calculation.

[56] *Ep.* 88.3 *Grammatice circa curam sermonis versatur et, si latius evagari vult, circa historias, iam ut longissime fines suos proferat, circa carmina. Quid horum ad virtutem viam sternit? Syllabarum enarratio et verborum diligentia et fabularum memoria et versuum lex ac modificatio—quid ex his metum demit, cupiditatem eximit, libidinem frenat?* Cf. *Ep.* 33.2 for a similarly conjoint dismissal of poetry and histories: speaking of quotable sententiae ("*flosculi*") Seneca says *eiusmodi vocibus referta sunt carmina, refertae historiae.*

[57] The date of this treatise is disputed but for my purposes it is enough to say that there is no evidence for a late date and some evidence for a date between 49 and 55, which would make it either earlier than or contemporary with the *Apocolocyntosis*. For a recent discussion see Williams (2003) 19–20.

[58] So Quintilian tells us (10.1.126): *quos ille non destiterat incessere, cum diversi sibi conscius generis placere se in dicendo posse quibus illi placerent diffideret.*

tent is trivial, says Seneca: he's just been to a recitation where someone went on and on about which Roman general did what first: who first won a naval battle, who first led elephants in a triumph, etc., which is pronounced "a pointless enthusiasm for learning superfluous things" (13.3 *inane studium supervacua discendi*).[59] Furthermore, when historians indulge in these antiquarian matters their reliability is dubious: their works are either "stuffed with lies" or "resemble lies" (13.9 *aut farta sunt mendaciis aut similia*). And finally, historiography celebrates acts destructive of human happiness. His examples (here and elsewhere) include the conquests of Philip and Alexander, and Rome's expansion of its empire on land and sea—standard historiographical fare, no?—but in the *de Brevitate* his particular bugbear is Pompey, who is celebrated for having introduced new kinds of killing into the amphitheater. Seneca develops this at length, but the gist of his discussion is this (13.7):

> Satius erat ista in oblivionem ire, ne quis postea potens disceret invideretque rei minime humanae.
>
> It would have been better for these wretched things to pass into oblivion, so that no potentate hereafter would learn of them or envy an action quite inhumane.[60]

In sum, historiography's materials are either useless, false, or noxious.[61]

5. *Too Close*

Quintilian's dictum that *historia* is *proxima poetis* is not a compliment. Like Seneca, he links historiography to poetry in order to deny its relevance to the more important business at hand: oratory for Quintilian, philosophy for Seneca (10.1.31 *plerasque eius* (sc. *historiae*) *virtutes oratori … vitandas*). Unlike Seneca, however, Quintilian grants

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[59] An enthusiasm that is peculiarly prevalent in the scant remains of Claudius' research: cf. Tac. *Ann.* 11.14.1 (first people to use letters), 11.16.1 (first Roman to become a foreign king), 11.22.4 (first quaestors), 11.25.1 (first Gallic senators), 12.6.3 (Rome's first uncle/niece marriage), 12.25.2 (first adoption in the Claudian *gens*).

[60] Pompey's innovation was to make elephants fight. This was part of the inauguration of his theater complex (Cic. *Fam.* 7.1, Plin. *Nat.* 8.20, Plu. *Pomp.* 52.4), a facility that Claudius restored after a fire and rededicated with games (Suet. *Cl.* 21, Dio 60.6.8–9). Claudius' cruelty and particular enjoyment of beast-fights are noted by Suetonius (*Cl.* 34). Perhaps here too Seneca has his eye on Claudius.

[61] Seneca stands the genre's traditional claims on their head: historiography from its beginning insisted on the importance of the events it related, claimed truth as its bedrock value, and offered moral instruction as an important byproduct or even an explicit aim.

historiography value in certain contexts—with leisured and well-educated readers, for example (10.1.32). He also concedes, without much discussion, that histories are a useful source of *exempla* (10.1.34; on this, Seneca would agree).[62] But for an orator's purposes—that is, for proving his point and winning his case—historiography's qualities, particularly the qualities that align it with poetry, are no good. Not even the great historian Livy will "provide sufficient information" (10.1.32 *neque … satis docebit …*) if a judge is looking for *fides*, "credibility," rather than polish in the narrative (… *eum qui non* <u>*speciem*</u> *expositionis sed* <u>*fidem*</u> *quaerit*).

If, however, you are looking for *species*, not *fides*, a historical (or "historical") work endowed with the poetic, or, more broadly speaking, literary qualities that Quintilian mentions in his discussion of the common ground between history and poetry—recherché diction (*verbis remotioribus*), imaginative troping (*liberioribus figuris*), Sallustian brevity, and Livian fullness—will keep you entertained (10.1.31 *narrandi taedium evitat*), and may even make a historical narrative memorable to you and bring credit to its author (ibid. *ad memoriam posteritatis et ingenii famam componitur*). A work such as, for example, the *Apocolocyntosis*. To be sure, it will be useless *ad probandum*. But for Seneca, writing a generation before Quintilian, historiography already had a credibility problem (or more than one). Mixing in poetic qualities merely improves its mockability. Just as Claudius' bestial body disqualifies him as *divus* (and gets him mocked) and his inarticulate voice discredits him as ruler (and gets him mocked), so the *historicus*' poetry-inflected, or, better, poetry-infected narrative disproves his generic pretensions (and gets him mocked). There's close, and too close.

[62] See, for example, Castagna (1991) and Gowing (2005) 69–81.

CHAPTER FOUR

CANNIBALISING HISTORY: LIVIAN MOMENTS IN STATIUS' *THEBAID*

Helen Lovatt

Introduction

Statius' *Thebaid* is an epic of gore, Greek myth and the grotesque; Livy's history is a monumental account of Rome from its founding, comprehensive, and often dry. Surely these two must represent the polar opposites of poetry and history? Yet the death of Tydeus in a cannibalistic frenzy, emblem of 'Silver Latin' excess and horror, has an analogue in Livy's account of the aftermath of Cannae.[1] Tydeus is killed from afar by Melanippus, and with his last burst of energy sends a spear after him; as he lies dying, he asks his friends to bring him the body, and gazes joyfully at the head (Stat. *Theb.* 8.757–762):

> infelix contentus erat: plus exigit ultrix
> Tisiphone; iamque inflexo Tritonia patre
> venerat et misero decus immortale ferebat,
> atque illum effracti perfusum tabe cerebri
> aspicit et vivo scelerantem sanguine fauces
> (nec comites auferre valent)

> The unlucky man was content: avenging Tisiphone
> exacted more; and now Athena had come, after persuading
> her father, and was bringing immortal glory to the wretched man,
> and saw him drenched in the gore of broken brain
> and polluting his throat with living blood
> (nor were his comrades strong enough to take it away)

In Livy, the un-named Roman forms the climax of a list of spectacles viewed by Hannibal on the battlefield (22.51.9):

[1] This analogy is noted by Dewar (1991) 57 and Pagán (2000) 428 n. 15, though neither commit themselves to direct influence.

> Praecipue convertit omnes subtractus Numida mortuo superincubanti Romano vivus naso auribusque laceratis, cum manibus ad capiendum telum inutilibus in rabiem ira versa laniando dentibus hostem exspirasset.
>
> All eyes were especially turned to a Numidian who was dragged out alive from under a dead Roman who was lying on top of him; but his nose and ears were mutilated, since, when the latter's hands had proved useless for seizing a weapon, his anger had turned to madness and he had breathed out his last while rending his enemy with his teeth.

Statius did not invent the Tydeus episode, which is attested in the epic cycle.[2] It is also well represented in art.[3] Verbal similarity with Livy is tangential: most striking is the adjective *vivo*, which presumably reflects the fact that Tydeus has only just recently ordered Melanippus' head cut off, but is not strictly appropriate, while, since Livy's Carthaginian is still alive, his Roman has also been covered with living blood. Statius and Livy respectively put emphasis on *vivo* and *vivus*: *vivo* is accented at the caesura, while Livy postpones *vivus* and makes a strong contrast with *mortuo*. The two authors play similar games with word order: Livy separates the adjective *vivus* from *Numida* by the intervening *mortuo superincubanti Romano*, while Statius mixes up *illum … perfusum tabe* with *effracti … cerebri*, puts Athena emphatically in the centre with *aspicit* and surrounds the sin of Tydeus (*scelerantem*) with the living blood (*vivo sanguine*). Livy's key words *rabies* and *ira* are both important for Tydeus: when he is first introduced (*Theb.* 1.41–42), he is described as *immodicum irae* | *Tydea* ("Tydeus excessive in anger"); the first line of the horrified response at the beginning of Book 9 is *Asperat Aonios rabies audita cruenti* | *Tydeos* ("The reported madness of bloody Tydeus makes the Thebans harsher"). We might also triangulate the two texts via Silius Italicus, who certainly was using Livy.[4] He transfers Livy's description of the aftermath at Cannae to Lake Trasimene where he names the cannibalistic Roman Laevinus (*Pun.* 6.41–54):

> Iuxta cernere erat meritae sibi poscere carmen
> virtutis sacram rabiem. Laevinus, ab alto
> Priverno, vitis Latiae praesignis honore,
> exanimum Nasamona Tyren super ipse iacebat
> exanimis. non hasta viro, non ensis; in artis

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[2] See now McNelis (2007) 133 for a discussion of Tydeus' affiliation with cyclic epic.

[3] See *LIMC* on Tydeus. The Pyrgi relief shows Athena as viewer of Tydeus' atrocity, and the figure of *Athanasia* features in two bell-craters.

[4] On this passage see Bassett (1959), who (26–27) makes a clear case for Silius' use of Livy, as well as Lucan's Scaeva episode and Virgil's Nisus and Euryalus episode.

abstulerat fors arma. tamen certamine nudo
invenit Marti telum dolor: ore cruento
pugnatum, ferrique vicem dens praebuit irae.
iam lacerae nares foedataque lumina morsu,
iam truncum raptis caput auribus, ipsaque diris
frons depasta modis, et sanguine abundat hiatus.
nec satias, donec mandentia linqueret ora
spiritus et plenos rictus mors atra teneret.

Nearby on display was the sacred madness of courage which deserved
to demand its own song. Laevinus, from high Privernum,
outstanding in the honour of the Latin vine,
himself lifeless, was lying above the lifeless Tyres,
a Nasamonian. The hero had no spear, no sword; Chance
had stolen away the weapons in the straits of battle; nevertheless in the unarmed
combat resentment found him a weapon of war. The battle was fought
with bloody mouth, tooth displayed instead of angry steel.
Now the nostrils are slashed, the eyes befouled by a bite,
now the head is reduced to a trunk, ears snatched, and the forehead itself
eaten up in a terrifying way, and the gaping jaws overflow with blood;
nor was there repletion, until the breath abandoned the gnawing
mouth and black death held it in a full grin.

There are verbal similarities with Statius, especially with Eteocles' speech in Book 9; it is notable that Laevinus mutilates the nose and ears (as in Livy) but also the eyes and forehead (which seems to draw him closer to Statius' Tydeus). Silius too makes *rabies* a key word (cf. Livy).[5] The three texts show a strong degree of similarity, but it is hard to say for definite that Statius is alluding to Livy or Silius is alluding to Statius.[6] What we do have is one poet contemporary with Statius who clearly was reading and alluding to Livian historiography. Given Statius' habit of going back to basics, for instance, using Homer to comment on Virgil, Apollonius to set against Valerius, it seems highly likely that reading (or hearing) Silius might encourage him to go back to Livy.[7]

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[5] Ash (2002) investigates battle scenes. Statius and Silius may well have been aware of each other's work during the composition process; Livy and Virgil are easier to untangle. Livy's earlier books were published before 27 BC, making it very likely that Virgil was able to use them in the writing of the *Aeneid*, as Woodman (1989) points out. In later books the relationship may have been the other way around. How much of the shared thematic and verbal similarity goes back to Ennius is hard to say.

[6] Though the exponential increase in graphic description in Silius might be an argument for his development of Statius' scene.

[7] For the "back to basics Statius" see Lovatt (2005) 12–19; on Statius using Apollonius

What might the comparison of these passages reveal about Tydeus and Statius? Vision and spectacle are important in all three passages. In Livy, but noticeably not in Silius, the scene is focalised by Hannibal, a tourist appreciating the spectacles of death, though Livy emphasises that they are repugnant even to enemies (22.51.5): *ad spolia legenda foedamque etiam hostibus spectandam stragem insistunt* ("they press on to collect the spoils and to view a slaughter foul even for enemies").[8] In Statius the key viewers are the gods: Athena (8.762–766, and later Mars at 9.4–7) is polluted by the sight and averts her gaze, just as Jupiter refuses to allow the gods to watch the fratricide of Polynices and Eteocles in *Thebaid* 11.[9] This reflects a key difference between the genres of epic and history: both have their internal audiences; epic moves between looking from above with the gods and looking from the margins with the women on the walls, whereas history looks down through the eyes of the general on the hill (often an avatar of the historian) or responds to the spectacle with the senate and the crowd. In Livy, the action is over and done, firmly in the past, though the Numidian survives as a living monument to the courage/desperation of the dead man. In Statius we are encouraged to identify with Tydeus, whose aristeia we have followed since 8.467, as he gazes, wild with joy, at his dying enemy (8.751–756):

> erigitur Tydeus vultuque occurrit et amens
> laetitiaque iraque, ut singultantia vidit
> ora trucesque oculos seseque agnovit in illo,
> imperat abscisum porgi, laevaque receptum
> spectat atrox hostile caput, gliscitque tepentis
> lumina torva videns et adhuc dubitantia figi.

> Tydeus raises himself and meets him with his face and mad
> with joy and rage, as he sees the gasping face
> and the murderous eyes and recognises himself in that man,
> he orders his enemy's dreadful head to be cut off and presented to him,
> and taking it in his left hand, gazes at it, and is elated as he sees
> the eyes of the still warm head, fierce and still wobbling, become fixed.

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and Valerius Flaccus, see Lovatt (2005) 143–162. McNelis (2007) also shows Statius going back to Hellenistic poetry, rather than sticking with its Roman imitators.

[8] On the post-battle viewing tradition, see Pagán (2000). Silius in contrast makes Hannibal and the Carthaginians after Cannae delight in the horrors (10.449–453), in a manner which has great similarities with Caesar in Lucan *BC* 7, though the burial of Paulus contrasts with Caesar's refusal to bury the dead.

[9] See Bernstein (2004).

The intimate details of Tydeus' encounter with Melanippus dying and dead are shared with the reader, patterns of assonance increasing the vividness still further. Are we about to be forced to bite into the warm and bloody brains along with him? Yet Statius cuts away at this point, protecting us along with Athena, who only arrives after the deed has been done. The other strong contrast is the response of the audience: while the implied author might be seen to exonerate Tydeus, everyone in the *Thebaid* vilifies Tydeus, from Athena and Mars, through his Argive friends, to his Theban enemies.[10] In Silius, Laevinus is represented as an *exemplum virtutis*, if a twisted one, along the lines of Lucan's Scaeva, and Livy remains mostly neutral, only drawing our attention to it as an outstanding spectacle, and implicitly condemning the Roman with *in rabiem ira versa*. It is surely significant, however, that, all thoughts of Hannibal the cannibal aside, the mutilator is a Roman in both Silius and Livy. Tydeus is not straightforwardly other; Statian poetics of *nefas* demand Roman complicity.[11] When the consul Varro later accuses the Carthaginians of cannibalism, it is clearly distanced from the viewpoint of the historian, the outraged rant of a bigot.[12] Livy's heroes are often problematic figures: Manlius, for instance, whose martial achievements precisely lead him to go beyond what is acceptable in his desire for kingship, leading to his execution at 6.20. Tydeus comes out of this comparison looking more sympathetic to a Roman audience than we might have expected, driving a wedge between the reactions of the internal audience and the readers (as Statius often does), while Livy offers a subtle reflection on otherness.

Silius' use of Livy is an enormous topic;[13] for Statius, however, the intrusion of Roman historiography, and Livy in particular, is not something we would expect. Whether or not we accept any direct allusion to Livy, parallels with historiography might offer new ways of thinking about the positioning of his readers. Andreola Rossi has recently explored the effects of historiographical material in Virgil's *Aeneid* and suggested that it makes Virgilian narrative polychronous (operating on more than

[10] Although much of Books 9 and 10 focuses on the battles for his corpse, and Polynices laments him; Tydeus is the closest to a Patroclus figure that the *Thebaid* offers.

[11] As Ganiban (2007) argues strongly.

[12] Liv. 23.5.12–13 *hunc natura et moribus immitem ferumque insuper dux ipse efferavit, pontibus ac molibus ex humanorum corporum strue faciendis et, quod proloqui etiam piget, vesci corporibus humanis docendo. his infandis pastos epulis, quos contingere etiam nefas sit, videre atque habere dominos et ex Africa et a Carthagine iura petere et Italiam Numidarum ac Maurorum pati provinciam esse, cui non, genito modo in Italia, detestabile sit?*

[13] The classic study is that of Nicol (1936); see also Nesselrath (1986).

one time at once).[14] Statius' *Thebaid* is certainly polychronous: the myth comes before Homer, let alone Virgil; yet the epic universe is often assimilated to Rome. Current orthodoxy has dispensed with the question of whether Statius' *Thebaid* is about anything: I hope that comparison with Livy will help to explore what it is about and to refine precisely how Statius' *Thebaid* both draws in and alienates its Roman readers.[15] This paper represents a foray into the historical territories of Statius' *Thebaid*; new terrain may well open up with the publication of the many commentaries on Statius currently in progress. Statius is very likely to have read Livy; the most obvious allusion I have seen so far comes in the suicide of Menoeceus in *Thebaid* 10, in which there are clear verbal echoes of the *devotio* of P. Decius Mus at Livy 8.9, explored by David Vessey in 1971.[16] Soubiran pointed out the similarity between Jocasta's mission to prevent the war in *Thebaid* 7 and Livy's Coriolanus episode (2.40), in which his mother Veturia succeeds in persuading him to abandon his attack on Rome.[17] Smolenaars (1994) 378 highlights a Livian moment in *Thebaid* 7 at 794–823, when the earthquake that swallows Amphiaraus reworks the earthquake at Lake Trasimene (Livy 22.5.8). Thiodamas' night attack in *Thebaid* 10 is reminiscent of Camillus' attack on the Gauls at night from Ardea (5.43.6–45.4). The links range from verbal similarities to looser structural and thematic parallels; the patterns in these parallels function as another way to make meaning within the complex intertextual (and generically cross-bred) world of the *Thebaid*. Where a conscious allusion specifically to Livy's text seems less likely, we can still think about Statius' use of Roman historical material, which would have been more familiar to his contemporary audience than it is to present-day readers. At their weakest these comparisons still offer a new perspective on the relationship between epic and history, in the similarities and differences between the narrative workings of the two genres. We have already seen one Livian moment of Statian battle narrative in Tydeus' death; I now

[14] Rossi (2004) 145–149: "anachronisms generate an effect of narrative polychrony." The manipulation of time, along with the representation of narrative as spectacle and internal audiences as model readers, draw the readers into the text, to follow Andrew Feldherr's model for both Livy (1998) and Virgil (2002).

[15] Ogilvie (1980) 234. McNelis (2007) 5, for instance, argues that "monarchy, the inheritance of it, and its role in society similarly confronted Thebes and Flavian Rome, and in the *Thebaid*, Thebes is a metaphor to examine civil war and its concomitant problems in early imperial Rome." This particular concern with monarchy is an apposite one for comparison with Livy, both in his subject matter and his context.

[16] Vessey (1971a), with a complex response in Heinrich (1999).

[17] Soubiran (1969); Vessey (1971b).

pursue two others (earthquake and night-raid) and finish with a reflection on tragedy and history in the Jocasta and Menoeceus episodes.

Battle Narrative

One of the main points of contact between epic and history is battle narrative: both Statius and Livy tell the stories of battles: the meeting of armies, action and reaction, flight and disorder.[18] Book 7 marks the beginning of the war at Thebes and is rich in material reminiscent of Livy and of historiography in general.[19] Statius has an earthquake as the climax of this book, swallowing Amphiaraus alive, mid-aristeia, an established part of the Theban myth. The earthquake in Livy's account of Lake Trasimene is also positioned at the climax of the battle, at the end of the chapter before he narrates the death of the consul Flaminius. Statius seems mainly to reverse Livy's earthquake. For Livy it is remarkable precisely because none of the fighters is aware of it (22.5.8):

> tantusque fuit ardor animorum, adeo intentus pugnae animus, ut eum motum terrae qui multarum urbium Italiae magnas partes prostravit avertitque cursu rapidos amnes, mare fluminibus invexit, montes lapsu ingenti proruit, nemo pugnantium senserit.
>
> and there was such a great blazing of spirits, and their minds were so intent on battle, that even that movement of the earth which laid low great parts of many Italian cities and turned swift streams out of their courses, carried the sea into the rivers, and overturned mountains with huge landslides, none of the fighters noticed.

The extremity of cosmic destruction and disorder is a metaphorical extension of the chaos of defeat at Lake Trasimene, though Livy avoids any explicit connection. For Statius, on the other hand, the earthquake becomes a substitute for battle, taking out Amphiaraus, and taking over

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[18] These are some of the topoi epic and historiographical that Rossi (2004) examines. On Statian battle narrative see Gibson (2008); at 103–107 he points out a number of anachronisms, including mentions of siege weapons, scythed chariots and the use of the word *legio*; however, he does not specifically concern himself with the intersection with historiography.

[19] At 7.441–451 the Argives fortify their position (modelled on Luc. 3.375–387; see Smolenaars (1994)); at 452–459 we see the reaction of the Thebans and the city panic-stricken by rumour; Smolenaars refers to this trope in Caesar and Lucan, as well as Hellenistic history; Jocasta's embassy at 470–563 will be discussed below; at 615–627 the general confusion before the battle narrative proper is compared by Smolenaars to Tac. *Hist.* 1.38.

fear of death from the fighting, a civil war of the elements, even described by a sea simile, which he so often uses to describe battle (7.794–808):

> iamque recessurae paulatim horrescere terrae
> summaque terga quati graviorque effervere pulvis
> coeperat; inferno mugit iam murmure campus.
> bella putant trepidi bellique hunc esse fragorem
> hortanturque gradus; alius tremor arma virosque
> mirantesque inclinat equos; iam frondea nutant
> culmina, iam muri, ripisque Ismenos apertis
> effugit; exciderunt irae, nutantia figunt
> tela solo, dubiasque vagi nituntur in hastas
> comminus inque vicem viso pallore recedunt.
> sic ubi navales miscet super aequora pugnas
> contempto Bellona mari, si forte benigna
> tempestas, sibi quisque cavent, ensesque recondit
> mors alia, et socii pacem fecere timores.
> talis erat campo belli fluitantis imago.

> And now little by little the earth began to tremble, about to withdraw,
> and the earth's surface began to shake and heavier dust had begun
> to seethe up; now the plain bellows with an infernal roar.
> The panicked men think this is war and the crash of war
> and encourage their advance; but another tremor diverts arms
> and men and wondering horses; now the leafy summits nod,
> now the walls, and Ismenos flees out from open banks;
> angers are forgotten, they fix their shaking
> weapons in the ground, and, wandering about, they lean on their unreliable spears, at
> close quarters, and, after seeing each other's paleness, they retreat.
> In just the same way, when Bellona stirs up naval battles on the waves,
> scorning the sea, if by chance a benevolent storm
> blows up, each fears for himself, and a different death
> sheathes the swords, and allied fears make peace.
> So was the image of flowing war on the field.

The topoi of earthquakes are similar to those in Livy: Livy has trees and mountains, rivers out of their courses, and sea intruding; Statius has leafy summits and the Ismenus fleeing from its banks. The image of the earthquake as a sea battle and the description of war as flowing (*fluitantis*) suggests the intrusion of the sea into the landscape.[20] The tone of Statius' account is very different: while Livy's is precise, specific and

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[20] It seems as if the wandering men coming and going, meeting and retreating, are like tidal waters, both a battle that is no longer a battle, and a version of the sea mixed up with the river.

economical, Statius' is blurred, confusing and expansive.[21] The gradual growing awareness of the sound of the earthquake, and the way the men stop fighting and watch each other and the natural phenomena, as if part of the audience of an epic duel, is uniquely Statian, giving Amphiaraus' end its due spectacular force. When Silius reworks the earthquake at Lake Trasimene (5.609–629), he places it just at the moment Hannibal is about to confront Flaminius, mixing together Statian vocabulary and ideas, though as in Livy the soldiers carry on fighting.[22] If Statius' passage does count as an allusion to Livy (and/or Silius), we can connect two of the deaths of the Seven with two major Roman defeats by Hannibal (Amphiaraus at Lake Trasimene; Tydeus at Cannae).

The other two Livian moments I consider here extend this pattern of mapping Roman defeat onto Statian Argos. We have visited Cannae and Lake Trasimene: the most resonant missing name is Allia. We could bring in the Gauls through the structural and thematic similarities of Thiodamas' night-raid on the Thebans from the Argive camp (10.176–325) to Camillus' night-raid on the Gauls from Ardea (Liv. 5.43.6–45.4). Camillus is in exile at Ardea; when the Gauls arrive there after giving up on attacking the Roman citadel, he pushes into the Ardeate council *nec secus quam divino spiritu* ("with an inspiration nothing less than divine," 5.43.8). He persuades them to attack the Gauls who are fast asleep after gorging themselves like wild beasts (5.44.7): *nisi vinctos somno velut pecudes trucidandos tradidero, non recuso eundem Ardeae rerum mearum exitum quem Romae habui* ("If I do not hand them over bound by sleep as if they were cattle to be slaughtered, I will not refuse the same outcome to my affairs at Ardea which I had at Rome"). They attack the camp at night and find no resistance (5.45.3): *nusquam proelium, omnibus locis caedes est; nuda corpora et soluta somno trucidantur* ("Nowhere was there a battle; instead there was killing in every place; naked bodies limp from sleep were slaughtered"). Here Camillus begins turning around Roman defeat at Allia, attacking from the margins, and foreshadowing his later rescue of Rome. Statius' episode in contrast represents an aberrant Argive victory in the pattern of overall defeat: Juno negotiates with Somnus

[21] The lack of clear verbal reminiscences does not prove that Statius was not thinking of this passage: variation is often as important as imitation; though this does make it less marked and obvious, demanding more active engagement from the reader.

[22] Smolenaars argues that Statius here imitates Silius; for discussion of the relative priorities of different books, making the assumption that "both Statius and Silius wrote at a steady pace and, unlike Virgil, in chronological order," see Smolenaars (1994) XVII–XVIII.

to put the otherwise vigilant Thebans to sleep (drawing on Ovid and Virgil's Palinurus); she then inspires Thiodamas to persuade the Argives to go with him into the Theban camp and slaughter the enemy. The council agree, the expedition is armed, and achieves its comprehensive destruction.

The Statian episode clearly draws on the epic tradition of the *Doloneia*, read through Virgil's Nisus and Euryalus episode. Nisus and Euryalus in turn may be drawing on Livy, since Book 5 was probably published before Virgil was writing (or both may be re-working Ennius). When Nisus proposes his mission he suggests he has been divinely inspired (*Aen.* 9.184–185): *dine hunc ardorem mentibus addunt, | Euryale, an sua cuique deus fit dira cupido?* ("Do the gods add this fire to men's minds, | Euryalus, or does his own terrible desire become a god for each man?"). When Nisus makes his proposal to the Trojan council, he uses a similar phrase to Livy's Camillus (9.236–237): *Rutuli somno vinoque soluti* [textual variant: *sepulti*] | *conticuere* ("The Rutulians fall silent, loosened by sleep and wine"). All three authors may also be looking back to Ennius, who at *Ann.* 288 has *nunc hostes vino domiti somnoque sepulti.*[23] Livy's imagery of domestic animals slaughtered might perhaps have originated in an epic simile.[24] In Virgil we have the image of a lion killing sheep (9.339–341); in Statius, a tigress slaughtering bullocks (10.288–292). Statius and Virgil have different areas of similarity with Livy; while the mission of Nisus and Euryalus in Virgil is to recall Aeneas, and the love story between Nisus and Euryalus complicates the motivation of the pair, Statius focuses on a simple raid to destroy enemies. Virgil's Rutulians, like the Gauls, are heedless and drunken, while Statius' Thebans are forced by divine agency to fall asleep.[25] Thiodamas is far from a straightforward Camillus figure: a frenzied priest, a substitute for Amphiaraus, whose one achievement

23 On the Virgilian passage see Hardie (1993) 110. Cf. also the speech of Sempronius Tuditanus at Livy 22.50, when he persuades the survivors of Cannae to break out of the camp through the sleeping enemy, though the verbal links are not that strong.

24 The night-raid is a topos of history as well as of epic: further examples include the Romans attacking the Etruscans successfully at night (Livy 9.37.5–11) and the raid of Gracchus on the Capuan camp at Hamae while the enemy were occupied with a nocturnal ritual (Livy, 23.35–36). Neither of these raids, however, has the same circumstantial parallels with that of *Thebaid* 10.

25 Thiodamas' speech, though focusing mainly on prophecy, does have possible verbal parallels with Camillus' speech, though they are common enough words, and to be expected given the subject matter: he orders the Argives to take up arms (196 *rapite arma*) as Camillus orders the Ardeates (44.7 *capite arma*). His describes the Thebans as *obruta somno* (10.194); cf. Livy's *soluta somno* (45.3).

is un-Roman enough to be scorned by Capaneus. Bringing Livy's night raid amongst this epic material offers a different paradigm: unlike the *Doloneia* and the Nisus and Euryalus episode, both of which are narrative dead-ends, the night-raid orchestrated by Camillus is a turning point. We might see Statius as playing with an alternative narrative scenario in which the Argives really do turn the battle around in Book 10, finally avoiding the mutual fratricide that he has been putting off for such a long time.

Tragic History

The two most substantially investigated Livian moments in the *Thebaid* are the suicide of Menoeceus in Book 10 and the embassy of Jocasta in Book 7. Both mix Livian reminiscence with tragic material from the *Phoenissae* (those of both Euripides and Seneca).[26] In what is perhaps a dated approach, Livy has often been described as a writer of "tragic history," history that aims to engage the emotions of readers as much as to analyse cause and effect or present a true factual account.[27] Statius' mixing of genres certainly shows the omnivorousness of epic, and the *Thebaid* in particular. Is there a particular tension in Statius between the grand narrative sweep of his epic history and the interpersonal claustrophobia of his tragic models? Both offer a (negative) exemplarity. Jocasta's mission to attempt to avert war in *Thebaid* 7 draws both on the high drama of the *Phoenissae* and the more measured narrative of Livy's Coriolanus episode.[28] In Statius, the Theban army has arrived and Jocasta goes out to beg Polynices to consider once more attempting a negotiation with Eteocles before committing himself to war.[29] This is the heart of Seneca's *Phoenissae*, which puts Jocasta between the swords of the two brothers as they are about to kill each other. Statius greatly reduces the dramatic impact of Jocasta's role by placing it so much earlier in the proceedings, and making it only a preliminary approach to an attempt

[26] On Statius and Greek tragedy, see Heslin (2008).

[27] See, for instance, Walbank (1960); Burck (1964) 176–233; Pauw (1991); Feldherr (1998) 7–8, 165–217.

[28] Coriolanus was, of course, considered appropriate material for a tragedy in due course by Shakespeare (largely based on Plutarch's *Life of Coriolanus*).

[29] In Seneca, we see the negotiations themselves, taking place in the middle of the battle line, with Jocasta literally interposing herself between the swords of her sons. In Euripides, the negotiations take place at an earlier stage and are refused outright.

to set up peace negotiations, rather than the actual negotiations themselves. Statius' brothers are given so little chance to escape their fate that it becomes much less about their characters and choices, and much more about the inevitable sweep of myth. The Furies, in the manner of Virgil's Allecto, intervene by starting hostilities in any case before the full debate can take place.

Statius departs from Euripides and Seneca by including Antigone and Ismene in the mission. This mother intervening to stop her son from destroying his own city has become much more like Veturia, the mother of Coriolanus: rather than stepping between the two sons, she approaches the one attacker, and she is not alone, but brings his other female relatives with her.[30] Smolenaars also suggests that the description of Jocasta as *magna cum maiestate malorum* ("with great dignity among her sorrows," 478) parallels *insignem maestitia* of Veturia.[31] Both gain stature from their suffering. Statius here seems to set tragic against historical models in order to create a sort of intertextual suspense.[32] Again, the historical model offers an optimistic outcome: for Livy's Veturia is successful in persuading her exiled son, Coriolanus, to pull back from attacking Rome along with the Volsci and return to exile. Because it happens at an early stage in the negotiations, Jocasta's mission might also have been successful, at least for a time, and we might have expected a long and involved scene of Polynices and Eteocles arguing about their right to the throne, at least, if we acknowledge that literary tradition makes it impossible that Polynices should suddenly become a Coriolanus. Where tragedy focuses on confrontations between people and stark choices, history gives us a sense of the broad sweep of events. In this respect epic

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30 *Theb.* 7.479 *hinc atque hinc natae*; Liv. 2.40.4 *dein familiarium quidam qui insignem maestitia inter ceteras cognoverat Veturiam, inter nurum nepotesque stantem*. The distinction between Polynices' sisters and Coriolanus' wife and children is inevitable, given that Polynices' wife (and he does not yet have any children) is on the Argive side.

31 Smolenaars (1994) 223; Soubiran (1969) 693–698 points to a number of persuasive parallels: *Theb.* 7.453–454 *impia belli | mater* evokes Liv. 2.40.8 *Ergo ego nisi peperissem, Roma non oppugnaretur* in sense, if not verbally; the position of *mater* and *castris* at either end of line 484 might echo Livy's phrase from 2.40.5 *materne in castris*; Livy's pairing of *hostem* and *filium* in Veturia's speech at 2.40.5 (*ad hostem an ad filium*) seems to lie behind Statius' placing of *hostem* and *natam* respectively at the ends of lines 490 and 491. Soubiran also equates the reaction of Coriolanus at 2.40.5 to the reaction of Polynices at 7.492–496. He also notes that both Polynices and Coriolanus do not speak in the episode, in contrast to the two tragic models.

32 Heslin (2008) 120–128 argues that Statius at 12.497–513 mixes tragedy (Aeschylus' *Eumenides* and Euripides' *Suppliant Women*) with Athenian oratory, in a similar movement between poetry and prose, tragedy and history.

is perhaps more like history than tragedy, if only an "edited highlights." Again readers gain a sense of paths not taken. Statius' epic narrative creates complex structures of delay and puts them in the way of the ultimate pay-off. A side-step into tragic history is one of these.

The Menoeceus episode is equally configured as a problematic digression, as Heinrich has persuasively argued.[33] Menoeceus is represented as a saviour of Thebes: the prophet Tiresias calls for his sacrifice; *Virtus* incarnate expedites it; *Pietas* and *Virtus* carry his body to the earth. But how does he save the city? It is never quite clear. His self-sacrifice comes immediately before Capaneus' assault on the Theban walls; Statius hints at a stronger causal connection between Menoeceus' suicide and Capaneus' destruction by Jupiter than is apparent in Euripides' *Phoenissae*, in which they are separated by most of the war.[34] By putting the two next to each other, Statius implies that Menoeceus has at least preserved Thebes from being destroyed single-handedly by Capaneus, suggesting again an alternative literary universe, in which Capaneus might win a crown for being the first to storm the walls of the besieged city.[35] However, the specifics of Statius' engagement with Livy are what lead Heinrich to feel that Menoeceus' sacrifice is ultimately an empty spectacle of *amor mortis*. The relevant passage of Livy is the *devotio* of P. Decius Mus at 8.9.9–12:

> ipse incinctus cinctu Gabinio, armatus in equum insiluit ac se in medios hostes immisit, conspectus ab utraque acie, aliquanto augustior humano visu, sicut caelo missus piaculum omnis deorum irae qui pestem ab suis aversam in hostes ferret. ita omnis terror pavorque cum illo latus signa prima Latinorum turbavit, deinde in totam penitus aciem pervasit. evidentissimum id fuit quod, quacumque equo invectus est, ibi haud secus quam pestifero sidere icti pavebant; ubi vero corruit obrutus telis, inde iam haud dubie consternatae cohortes Latinorum fugam ac vastitatem late fecerunt.

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33 Heinrich (1999). See also Coffee (2009) 217–220.

34 Menoeceus' sacrifice at *Phoen.* 1090–1092; Capaneus struck down at *Phoen.* 1172–1186 at either end of the messenger speech describing the battle. Heinrich (1999) 184–185.

35 Heinrich (1999) goes slightly further than I would like here by denying any effectiveness to Menoeceus' sacrifice: he argues that 10.879–892 represent the destruction of the city by Capaneus; but surely it can only be a minor breach of the walls; if Menoeceus' sacrifice has caused or even guaranteed Jupiter's intervention, it has had the desired effect. Heinrich, however, is quite right about the negative further consequences of Menoeceus' *amor mortis*. See also Fantham (1997) on the problems associated with the representation of the personification *Virtus* in this episode. At 10.854–855 Statius reflects on this alternative narrative path; see Gibson (2008) 101.

> He himself girded in the Gabinian girdle, jumped, armed, onto his horse and thrust himself into the middle of the enemy, clearly visible from both lines, rather more portentous to look upon than a human, as if he had been sent from heaven as an atonement for all the angers of the gods, and to avert the destruction from his own men and to carry it against the enemy. Thus all terror and panic borne with him threw the first ranks of the Latins into confusion; then it reached deep inside the whole line. That was most clear because wherever he rode, there they were panicking, just as if they had been struck by a plague-bearing star; but, when he fell, overwhelmed by weapons, from then, without any doubt, the cohorts of the Latins were confounded and everywhere created desolation in their flight.

This passage is poetic and epic in tone: *sicut caelo missus piaculum omnis deorum irae* evokes the world of epic where the gods look down over everything; it equally suggests a simile, as does *haud secus quam pestifero sidero icti*, which recalls the famous simile of Achilles as the dog-star bearing down on Hector (*Iliad* 22.25–32).[36] Heinrich argues that, because Menoeceus' suicide is confined to the heights of the Theban walls, and his body is brought down gently to earth by *Pietas* and *Virtus*, to a quiet and dignified response from the Argive enemy, he does not actually perform a *devotio*. The language of Livy's *devotio* is mainly to be found earlier in the passage. Specifically Menoeceus is called *iam sacer aspectu solitoque augustior ore* ("now sacred to look at and more portentous than his accustomed face," *Thebaid* 10.757).[37] Instead it is Capaneus whose body falls onto the Argives, causing panic and destruction.[38] If Menoeceus seems to take the Roman role, Capaneus is also a perversely sympathetic, and Roman, figure.[39] Here the historical material takes over the climax of the tragedy, suggesting that the two are too intertwined to be separated.[40]

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36 Oakley (1998) ad loc. points to the proverbial use of "star-struck" as a metaphor for astonishment. But in association with the markedly heroic context of Decius' *devotio* this may not be dead metaphor.

37 Vessey (1971a) 239.

38 Heinrich (1999) 188–189.

39 On Capaneus see Leigh (2006).

40 The Menoeceus episode may also contain a reminiscence of another Livian episode, this time from the second Punic war, and in competition with Silius' version. The encounter between Menoeceus and Creon has some similarity to the discussion between Calavius, the traitor who orchestrated the defection of Capua, and his son, who intends to assassinate Hannibal, at Livy 23.8–9. In particular, Creon's speech in which he pleads with Menoeceus begins with a verbal reminiscence of the elder Calavius' speech to his son. In Livy we have (23.9.2): *'per ego te' inquit, 'fili, quaecumque iura liberos iungunt parentibus, precor quaesoque ne ante oculos patris facere et pati omnia infanda velis.'* In Statius we have (10.694–696): *per ego oro tuosque, | nate, meosque annos, miseraeque per ubera matris |*

Feldherr argues that Livy sets up tragedy as a suspect form, while the spectacle that he puts on in his history is fundamentally more edifying.[41] Statius' narrative form and functions may have more in common with history than tragedy, but its tone and the resulting effects have much more in common with tragedy. Heinrich describes Menoeceus' suicide as "mere spectacle, an ecphrasis of extravagant self-destruction" and suggests that the poem forms "a world of violence that exceeds the narratable." History in contrast is a world of connected narrative and orderly causation.

Conclusion

There is more historical material than one might expect buried in Statius' Theban ground. The repeated evocation of moments of Roman defeat is particularly striking. Most frequently the Argives are mapped onto defeated Romans. Only in tragic mode do Thebans take on Roman roles. Rather than systematically reconfiguring a historical narrative, as Silius does, Statius cannibalises Livy: he takes bits and pieces and puts them into new contexts, creating a complex network of associations. Statius offers glimpses of ways of making sense of the world, Livian moments that seem to suggest things might be under control after all, only to ingest, chew them over and spit them out. This cannibalisation of history's orderly narrative takes a working machine and turns it into a grotesque robotic monster, bits bolted on where none should be, surprisingly alive and sinisterly threatening. This is a text that eats itself; comparison with

ne vati, ne crede, puer! Creon's reference to *pietas* at 711 (*haec pietas, hic verus honos*) may also pick up on the younger Calavius' reply to his father (Livy 23.9.10): '*ego quidem*' *inquit,* '*quam patriae debeo pietatem exsolvam patri.*' The structure of the scene is also very similar, with a plea from the father, reaction and response from the son, and the result: in Livy the father is successful, and the son decides not to violate hospitality and disobey his father. In Statius, Menoeceus' reply to Creon is deceptive, and, although he pretends to be persuaded, he is not. This contrasts with the episode at Silius 11.315–368, in which the son is initially unrepentant, but the father makes a second speech in which he threatens to protect Hannibal with his own life, and the son gives in. Silius' version of the father's entreaty picks up on different verbal reminiscences from Livy: *per siquid superest vitae, per iura parentis | perque tuam nostra potiorem, nate, salutem, | absiste inceptis oro* (*Pun.* 11.332–334). This suggests that the two poets might be working independently from Livy's text. Perhaps this similarity works to endorse Menoeceus: he succeeds in going ahead with his heroic plan, while his cowardly father is thwarted. The treacherous Calavius is elsewhere given a damning portrayal by Livy.

[41] Feldherr (1998) 165–169.

the comforting orderliness of Livy brings out how unsettling Statius' historical vision is.[42] He also cannibalises in another sense, by bringing out epic tendencies in Livy. After all, Livy almost invokes the Muses in his preface (*Pref.* 13):

> cum bonis potius ominibus votisque et precationibus deorum dearumque, si, ut poetis, nobis quoque mos esset, libentius inciperemus, ut orsis tantum operis successus prosperos darent.
>
> We would rather begin more willingly with good omens and offerings and prayers to gods and goddesses—if, as for the poets, it were also our custom—that they might grant us a successful outcome to the beginnings of such a great work.

This is another weapon in Statius' armoury of confusion and alienation: this Greek myth is never straightforwardly Greek or myth. Sparks of Roman historical material, like the Roman locations and events in the Greek athletic games, serve both to draw contemporary readers in, to make them identify in particular with the Argives, and to defamiliarise them, not to allow any easy or straightforward interpretation.[43]

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[42] It would be revealing to put Statius into dialogue with Tacitus to attempt to create a sense of how much this is a matter of zeitgeist and how much a matter of genre.

[43] Many thanks to Stephan Oakley and Philip Hardie for reading this chapter and improving it immensely. All remaining errors are, of course, my own.

CHAPTER FIVE

REPLACING HISTORY: INAUGURATING THE NEW YEAR IN STATIUS, *SILVAE* 4.1*

Jean-Michel Hulls

On January 1st AD 95, the emperor Domitian acceded to his seventeenth and final consulship. The event was commemorated by a short panegyrical poem written by Statius. The poem is artful if obsequious, and cunning if not subtle, and short enough to be rather good fun. It is also a poem that plays with notions of history, time and historical writing,[1] and this theme will be the main focus of this paper. Yet we must also acknowledge the poem as part of a larger literary and generically appropriative project, the fourth book of the *Silvae*, a work which constructs a succession of re-workings of different literary genres as short occasional poems.[2] 4.1 also writes itself into Domitian's all-encompassing ideological assault on Rome and her institutions, simultaneously participating in and building a vision of the brave new Domitianic Rome. Moreover, Statius has his own artistic agenda to pursue in writing this poem and the book which it opens. Statius' epistolary preface to Marcellus, which immediately precedes our poem, indicates that the poet wishes to frame this new collection as a more elevated, more serious, more important species of writing (*Silvae* 4 *praef.*):

> inveni librum, Marcelle carissime, quem pietati tuae dedicarem. reor equidem aliter quam invocato numine maximi imperatoris nullum opusculum meum coepisse, sed hic liber tres habet

Whereas Statius' previous collections of poetry are referred to by the almost pejorative diminutive *opusculum*, this work has the more solid

* Many thanks for their suggestions to the delegates at the conference in Charlottesville, especially to Bruce Gibson and Carole Newlands. The errors remain my own.

1 "Writing" is used, both by myself and by Statius, to cover a broad range of concept and meaning ranging from epigraphic and monumental, through literary and into the metaphorical notion of writing one's (and one's emperor's) place in history.

2 So, for example, 4.2 reworks epic poetry, especially epic banqueting scenes: see esp. Malamud (2007); similarly 4.5 and 4.7, Statius' only lyric poems, play with the history and conventions of that genre.

and significant label of "book," emphasised by repetition (*librum … liber*).[3] Statius is not making a distinction based upon the quality of his poetry here, however, but one of quantity (three Domitianic poems to begin the book) and content (only the fourth poem is addressed to the book's dedicatee: 4 *praef.* line 4: ⟨…⟩ *se quam quod quarta ad honorem tuum pertinet*).

He writes 4.1 as a means of self-promotion; Statius' success is complicit in and an expression of Domitian's success. In other words, Statius is the voice which advertises, celebrates and propagandises Domitian's seventeenth consulship as a key element within the emperor's ideological programme. In so doing Statius makes the literary renaissance under Domitian (in which Statius, Martial, Silius Italicus and Valerius Flaccus were prominent figures) an essential component of that programme. Yet there is more to Statius' poetic strategy than this. The poet quietly shifts his relationship with the super-powerful, godlike master into something more of the you-scratch-my-back-and-I'll-scratch-yours variety;[4] Statius becomes the master-voice that the emperor cannot do without. There is only the space here for a brief examination of a complex poem within a complex poetic project, and readers should forgive the desire to examine historical issues at the expense of looking at the poem's place within the *Silvae* as a whole and its relationship with earlier literature, although both of these areas will receive an honourable mention.

The poem begins (1–10)[5] with a brief description of the main event, Domitian participating in the ceremony that marks the Roman new year as well as the emperor's 17th consulship, and betrays an obsessive focus on Roman institutions and public buildings. Yet the poet's authorial voice gives way to the god Janus, whose role as traditional inaugurator of the year is emphasised even as it is undermined, whose role in Domitian's building programme is outlined (11–16), and whose speech to Domitian forms the bulk of the piece (17–43). Janus' speech includes further calendrical and religious allusions to the emperor's greatness, confirmation that *all* of Rome rejoices at his consulship, details of Domitian's surpass-

[3] It is possible that Statius includes the *Thebaid*, which also begins with an invocation of Domitian, in this list of *opuscula*. Statius is elsewhere in the *Silvae*, not least in Book 4, happy to construct paradoxical contrasts between momentous, occasional poetry-in-miniature and frivolous epic.

[4] For Domitian as a divine figure, see Griffin (2000). For divine imagery in descriptions of Domitian by Statius, see e.g. *Silvae* 4.2, where the emperor appears very similar to a statue in the sanctuary of a temple; see Newlands (2002) 260–283.

[5] Text and translation of 4.1 throughout are taken from Coleman (1988).

ing of Augustus, and anticipation of the great age to come that this event inaugurates and of future conquests around the globe. The poem ends with a brief summary of Janus' and Jupiter's endorsement of Domitian (44–47). 4.1 involves a complex interweaving of a variety of themes and ideas to create its effect, and we will examine each of these rapidly in turn before offering a new synthetic reading of our own.

Calendars and Annals: Re-formatting History (4.1.1–2)

The first two lines play with our calendrical expectations. This is Roman historical writing *par excellence*, starting a new work the way the annalists would, beginning a new year with a new consul. Yet Statius goes against the grain of Roman writing by mentioning only one consul, Domitian, and avoids a traditional (and metrically impossible) construction in the ablative listing the consuls (cf. e.g. Tac. *Ann.* 1.55.1 *Druso Caesare C. Norbano consulibus*) in favour of the arresting *laeta* (1), an unsubtle reminder of Rome's emotional unity, a theme reiterated throughout the poem. The proliferation of possible titles is intriguing. *Laeta* could, as first word of the collection proper, have acted as the title of Book 4 as a whole, yet we not only (inevitably) get an extra title for each poem (derived from its own first word), but also Statius' covering letter, *inveni librum* (4 *praef.* 1), which acts as a further heading. The deliberate confusion of beginnings is underlined by Statius' letter to the dedicatee Marcellus—we get three imperial starters for the price of one (*reor* ... *habet*, 4 *praef.* 2–4). There is more to this observation than mere confusion: the multiplicity of titles that Statius encodes into his book of poetry programmatically mimics the effect that Domitian (via Statius' poem) hopes to have on historical time and memory, blurring the boundaries between past and future and blurring the established means by which Roman readers understand and categorise Roman historical processes.

Laeta ... *accedit purpura* ("Happily the purple is added") encompasses Domitian's past, his "twice eight" (*bis octonis*) consulships; there is an implication that Domitian's seventeenth consulship will be of greater importance. Such careful play with the details of Roman history is embedded in the rest of line 2. We might expect to hear of Domitian's consular colleague, Flavius Clemens, not least as he is the emperor's cousin and as Domitian has just adopted his sons as his heirs to the Flavian throne. The sons of Flavius Clemens were also renamed as Domitian and Vespasian. Statius might, perhaps, be thinking of Domitian's most

significant predecessor, Augustus, and therefore attempting to over-write his memory; such over-writing certainly forms a prominent theme in this poem. Furthermore, the process of adoption and renaming was presumably based on a historical glance back at the precedent set by Augustus, who used his last two consulships in 5 and 2 BC to introduce Gaius and Lucius Caesar as his prospective heirs. Yet Statius drives his point home in an entirely more direct way, ignoring both predecessors and successors; the *fasti* belong entirely to Caesar.

By this process, any Flavii other than Domitian himself are ignored as Statius introduces an alternative name for Domitian and his year, *insignemque aperit Germanicus annum*. In this way, "Germanicus" is not only Domitian's *cognomen*, but also the name for the month of September, and now the Roman identifier for AD 95, to which Domitian as *consul ordinarius* lends his name.[6] However, Caesar Germanicus does more than inscribe himself on the year, he becomes the *only* consul, and not only for this year. Domitian's seventeen are almost the only ones worth mentioning at all; even Augustus' thirteen consulships get disparaged by Janus (31–33).

In this poem, we are also naturally reminded of another Germanicus, the youthful and hugely popular addressee of Ovid's *Fasti* Book 1. Statius' poem opens with language strongly reminiscent of Ovid's work. The use of *fastis* at the end of Statius' first line is an obvious trigger for this sort of comparison, as is the opening word of our poem, *laeta*, which evokes the culmination of Ovid's work on the first of January (1.87 *salve, laeta dies*). Furthermore, *Germanicus annus* (2) clearly evokes the opening of Ovid's *Fasti* (1.1–3 *annum … Germanice*), as does *oritur cum sole* (3; cf. *Fast.* 1.2 *ortaque signa*). There is a just a hint that Domitian is styling himself as the greatest Julio-Claudian *princeps* Rome never had. Yet in *Silvae* 4.1 we get a compression of the politics of dedication as Statius found it in Ovid's poem. Domitian is very much a successor to Augustus as we first see him in Ovid's poem (on the 1st February, *Fast.*

[6] See Hardie (1983) 194 on naming the year. Domitian assumed the *cognomen* Germanicus in AD 83; see Suet. *Dom.* 13.3. Domitian renamed September "Germanicus" because he became *princeps* on September 14th AD 81; he renamed October "Domitianus" because he was born on October 24th AD 51; on the renaming of months, see Coleman (1988) on 4.1.43. Statius never uses the name Domitian in his poetry (it appears only in the titles of *Silvae* 1.1, 4.1, 4.3 and as the name of the Via Domitiana at 4 *praef.* 7), preferring the *cognomen* Germanicus (it occurs elsewhere at *Silv.* 1.1.5, 1.4.4, 3 *praef.* 18, 3.3.165, 3.4.49, 4 *praef.* 6, 4.2.52, 4.9.17, 5.1.105, 5.2.177), Caesar, or an allusive expression. It may be that Germanicus became Domitian's "official" name in some sense.

2.55–66), a restorer of temples.[7] As we shall see,[8] Domitian combines the youthful appeal of the earlier Germanicus and the reconstructing agenda of Augustus and manages to outdo both his predecessors.

Art and life begin to imitate one another; 4.1 depicts a new consul for the new year and a new era of Roman history. Yet the clean slate is crucial to the text as well; we are reading a new poem, beginning a new poetry book. The sense of novelty and new beginnings is crucial to the poem's message. Historical time is being re-written even as we read Statius' poem and, as Janus' speech implies, there are still ten months yet to acquire a Domitianic name (43 *cupiuntque decem tua nomina menses*). As we will explore below, Domitian is going to take Janus' role as renewer of ages (11 *reparator … aevi*).

*Monumental Poetry: Re-building History (*titulus; *4.1.1–16)*

The titles of individual poems which are transmitted in the manuscript tradition of the *Silvae*, although not Statius' own, are often revealing not only of the content of the poems pure and simple, but also of the manner in which these poems would like to be received.[9] The near contemporary who wrote these titles performed a subtle and often invaluable interpretive function. 4.1's title signals the quasi-epigraphic, monumental weight of the poem: *SEPTIMVS DECIMVS CONSVLATVS IMP. AVG. GERMANICI.* There is no generic description of the poetry here as for other poems in Book 4.[10] Rather 4.1 acquires the status of object, no different in character from the road or the statues of other poems.[11] 4.1 *is* Domitian's consulship, objectified, monumentalised, written as though carved in stone.

The opening lines play on this theme and Domitian's achievement is keyed into *fastis*, not simply a metonymy for the office, but a literal reminder of the emperor's sixteen entries in the calendrical record,

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[7] See Herbert-Brown (1994) 32–108 on Augustus in the *Fasti*.

[8] See below on Janus and the Forum Transitorium, 95–96.

[9] See Coleman (1988) xxviii–xxii. These *tituli* of course add to the confusion of beginnings in this poetry book.

[10] The attempt to pigeonhole Statius' generically cross-fertilized poetry seems naive in the extreme, but the titles often reveal some of the well-buried meanings in Statius' poems. For *Silvae* 3.3 as more than a *consolatio*, see Hulls (forthcoming).

[11] This idea of the poem as a physical monument is one of the broader themes in Statius' collection (see Hulls (forthcoming) for *Silvae* 3.3 as a monument of mourning), but also keys us into the notion of Domitian as a statue, a key feature of *Silvae* 4.2.

carved in stone.[12] It is also the physical objects which do all the acting and speaking in 4.1. It is the laws themselves which exult in Domitian's consulship, the curule seats which rejoice, the seven hills of Rome and the Palatine most of all which cheer him (5–8 *exsultent leges Latiae, gaudete, curules,* | *et septemgemino iactantior aethera pulset* | *Roma iugo, plusque ante alias Evandrius arces* | *collis ovet*); later on it is the Curia (10), not the senators within it, which rejoices that it has persuaded the emperor to another consulship. Domitian is again objectified, this time as *fasces*, as he enters his Palatine Palace (8 *subiere novi Palatia fasces*), while the lictors are only seen in metonymic form as *honos*.[13] Statius does a little historical finessing (7–8) by spanning the gap between Evander's primitive shack and the brand-new *Domus Flavia* in one hexameter: "the periphrasis thus imbues Domitian's palace with associations of venerable antiquity."[14] Yet Statius' one-liner could be said to be doing a bit more: *Silvae* 4.1 transcends the Virgilian Augustanism of *Aeneid* 8 as primeval Rome now pays due reverence to Domitian's metropolis.[15]

This historical compression hides a bigger theme, where Rome's people are elided in Statius' poem and Rome herself becomes the sum of her institutions, her monuments. 4.1 is complicit in and an expression of this process of monumentalisation. It is a remarkable narrative of architectural triumphalism. The process continues as Statius hands the poem over to Janus, who is fixed very carefully into Rome's topographical landscape. And make no mistake that this is Domitian's Rome. We have already seen *his* equestrian statue in the Forum Romanum in 1.1 and

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[12] Records for which Domitian as *pontifex maximus* is responsible. The multiplicative periphrasis *bis octonis* is a standard way of rendering a numeral in poetry, especially if that numeral is metrically intractable (see Coleman (1988) ad loc.), but there may be an element of intertextual one-upmanship encoded in Statius' desire to count in this way; it ups the ante in comparison to the twice six years it took to compose his *Thebaid* (*Theb.* 12.811–812 *bissenos multum vigilata per annos* | *Thebai*; itself one up on Virgil's eleven-year composition of the *Aeneid*), but also looks back to Ovid's review of the *Fasti* as *sex … totidemque libellos* in *Tristia* 2.549—Ovid would have written twice six books of *Fasti*, had he been allowed, but Statius' "Fasti" are "twice eight plus another one" that constitutes a complete "twelve-months-of-Domitian" poem.

[13] Line 9 is corrupt, and the number of lictors still a matter of debate; see Coleman (1988) ad loc. and the note by Shackleton Bailey (2003) 244. *Honos*, however, is secure and the metonymy is repeated at 4.1.27.

[14] Coleman (1988) ad loc. On Evander's home on the Palatine, see Liv. 1.7.3; Virg. *Aen.* 8.51–54. On Domitian's palace, see *Silv.* 4.2 with Newlands (2002) 260–283 and Hulls (2007); Suet. *Dom.* 15; and esp. Zanker (2002).

[15] The reference to a more primitive ancient Rome also calls to mind similar references in Ovid's *Fasti*, esp. 1.197–202, 243–244.

his palace on the Palatine (line 8) and *his* Curia (line 10), the new Senate building built by the emperor in AD 94.[16] The statue of Janus Quadrifrons is to be found in the temple in *his* Forum Transitorium, the one built by Domitian, and overlooked by the Temple of Peace (13 *vicina Pace*), built by Vespasian, but apparently altered by Domitian.[17] The Minerva who, according to Janus, folds Domitian's purple toga (21–22) is another neighbour, her temple housed at the far end of the Transitorium. The consulship is wrapped up in an ideology-driven building programme; Rome is depicted as unmistakeably Domitianic. The writing is on the wall as Domitian inaugurates a new year for Rome. Statius shows us history being controlled at the physical level.

Astronomy: Controlling History (4.1.3–4; Ovid's Fasti*)*

Domitian's temporal control is extended to an astronomical level. The emperor becomes, literally, a universal power. The consul's opening of the year is couched in terms that suggest the beginning of a new planetary cycle,[18] and it is Domitian himself who arises with the sun and stars and the New Year. Yet the emperor-consul now assumes the status of star himself, better and brighter and shinier. There is an allusion to Domitian's notorious red face in *nitens*, one that Statius will work out more carefully in the following poem,[19] but this is also Domitian at his most statuesque, his shining face aping the shiny quality of marble that would have represented it in portraiture.[20] Such qualities are reflected in the unity of *eques*, *plebs* and senators in Janus' speech, the increased gleam of Rome's temples and the taller flames within them, the brighter stars in midwinter, and every magistracy drawing light from the consul (4.1.23–27):

> aspicis ut templis alius nitor, altior aris
> ignis et ipsa meae tepeant tibi sidera brumae,
> moribus atque tuis gaudent turmaeque tribusque
> purpureique patres, lucemque a consule ducit
> omnis honos.

[16] See Coleman (1988) on 4.1.12.

[17] Suet. *Vesp*. 9.1; Jos. *BJ* 7.158; for the apparent alterations, see *Silv*. 4.3.17 with Coleman (1988) ad loc.

[18] For *annum aperire* as technical term for the beginning of the planetary cycle, see Coleman (1988) ad loc. and cf. Virg. *G*. 1.217.

[19] See Hulls (2007).

[20] See Bradley (2007).

The astronomical theme is picked up at the end of the poem, as the gods give heavenly signs of their contentment. The new consul opens the new year in a new way. Domitian now controls the very heavenly bodies by which time is measured. The astronomical imagery in connection with the new year anticipates the saecular theme attached to Domitian later in the poem. Moreover, the inauguration of the new era which Statius depicts perhaps reminds us of the opening of Virgil's *Eclogue* 4 (e.g. 5–6 *ultima Cumaei venit iam carminis aetas;* | *magnus ab integro saeclorum nascitur ordo*); Domitian not only opens a new year but a new age. Thus he acquires control of time and history at a universal level.

Yet Statius also plays another astronomical game within the fabric of his poem. This astronomical poem has one eye firmly on literary history and in particular on its most significant literary predecessor, Ovid's *Fasti*.[21] The Ovidian poem has obvious similarities to the Statian one: both are concerned with astronomy, religious matters and the social, cultural and historical fabric of imperial Rome. Both texts are deeply involved in the political discourse of the time and the aggrandisement of their imperial addressees. A considerable chunk of Book 1 of the *Fasti* (1.63–294) relates directly to the Kalends of January and includes the god Janus as a major interlocutor. The beginning of *Silvae* 4.1 mimics the opening of the Ovidian year (*Fasti* 1.63–64 *ecce tibi <u>faustum, Germanice, nuntiat annum</u>* | *inque meo primus carmine Ianus adest*), but with subtle shifts in emphasis: where Ovid's Janus announces an auspicious year for Germanicus, it is Domitian (here called Germanicus) who opens AD 95, with Janus merely an observer; Statius' *fastis* (4.1.1) might remind us of Ovid's *faustum*, and it is interesting to note how Statius uses the term to represent 'consulships' where Ovid used it to mean 'calendar' (*Fasti* 1.61 *totis haerentia fastis*). Ovid invites Janus to come and favour Rome's senators, people and temples (1.69–70). Statius meanwhile shows the fabric of Rome, including Janus himself, rejoicing at Domitian's latest consulship. Statius joins in the process of re-writing and over-writing implicit throughout the poem.

Domitian's brighter Rome goes beyond the limits set in Ovid's poem, taking on the responsibilities and powers accorded to Janus. The increased gleam and light brought to Rome by Domitian reminds us of

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[21] The *Fasti* is not the only poem one might look at in this way, merely, I would contend, the most crucial. Virgil's fourth *Eclogue* also looms large in the background, as do a number of other politically charged didactic texts both Greek and Roman.

the increased brightness and splendour that we see in Ovid's 1st January (*Fasti* 1.75–82):

> cernis odoratis ut luceat ignibus aether,
> et sonet accensis spica Cilissa focis?
> flamma nitore suo templorum verberat aurum,
> et tremulum summa spargit in aede iubar.
> vestibus intactis Tarpeias itur in arces,
> et populus festo concolor ipse suo est,
> iamque novi praeeunt fasces, nova purpura fulget,
> et nova conspicuum pondera sentit ebur.

Again, we can see how Statius transfers power, implied through shining light, away from the god and that most Roman of ceremonies, the New Year's ascent to the Capitol, and onto the person of the emperor himself. It is, says Statius' Janus, Domitian who brings new light to Rome. This shift of power away from the god towards the emperor, which we see worked out in the latter part of Statius' poem,[22] seems all the more extraordinary when one considers the absolute supremacy of Ovid's Janus (in particular, see *Fasti* 1.117–130, esp. 119 *me penes est unum vasti custodia mundi*). The transformation of the universe depicted in Ovid's *Fasti* runs parallel to Domitian's transformation of the universal landscape in the opening lines of *Silvae* 4.1. His "opening of a new year" is nothing short of a complete re-ordering of divine power structures.

Transitions: Re-structuring History (4.1.11–16)

4.1 marks out a liminal space, especially in lines 11–16. This is a poem in which, despite the fact that Statius celebrates an event that has happened sixteen times before, Rome is entering a new age. Everything in Rome, its history, time, topography and astronomy, is in a state of flux. Who better, then, to narrate this process than Janus himself, who gives thanks from *both* his thresholds (12–13 *utroque a limine grates* | *Ianus agit*); this is an opportunity to look forward and to look back. Physical space mimics the process of historical transition, concretising an abstract concept. Yet the theme of transition is marked out more widely. The Kalends of January is of course a transitional moment, from one year to the next, and from one set of consuls *ordinarii* to the next. Janus himself is undergoing

[22] See below, 96–100.

some changes. Our twin-voiced speaker is the two-faced Janus Geminus (16 *levat ecce supinas | hinc atque inde manus geminaque haec voce profatur*), housed somewhere in the complex of imperial fora near the Templum Pacis (13 *vicina Pace ligatum*). Yet by the end of AD 95,[23] his confined temple somewhere on the Argiletum may have been demolished. Janus had new quarters in the Temple of Janus Quadrifrons at the southern end of Domitian's Forum Transitorium.[24] We get a snapshot of building projects under construction; the Forum Transitorium was only consecrated by Nerva in AD 97, and is here a brand new complex (14–15 *novique | in leges iurare fori*). Statius is clearly playing on the notion of a god of transitions, moving from one home to another, based in a "Transitory Forum," congratulating the emperor on the inauguration of a new era. AD 95 is becoming a turning point in world history as Domitian rapidly assumes control of the Roman state, her institutions, her buildings, her means of measuring time and recording history.

New-ageism and Augustus Anxiety: Re-writing History (4.1.17–43)

Janus himself is utterly dominated by the emperor-consul. There is a pointed contrast between Statius' Janus and Janus as he is depicted in Ovid's *Fasti* 1, where the super-powerful deity favours a different Germanicus, and guarantees universal peace after his victory over barbarian enemies.[25] Vespasian's personified *Pax* now takes over as supervisor of Peace and War, another powerful paradox which further emphasises the fundamental changes this poem depicts.[26] Here, the mighty renewer of immeasurable ages is ordered by Domitian to stop all wars (14 *omnia iussisti componere bella*; cf. Ov. *Fast.* 1.253 *nil mihi cum bello*) as Domitian shifts the god into a Flavian building complex. Janus now can only found new ages with Domitian's help (17–18 *qui saecula mecum | instaurare paras*; 37 *mecum altera saecula condes*). Janus' use of *mecum* seems to be pleading with Domitian to let him take part, rather than a tolerant admission of a mortal into his role. Furthermore, it seems that the god is quite content with this new state of affairs (esp. 19–21 *sic tempora* …

[23] Mart. 10.28. Book 10 was published in December 95.
[24] See Coleman (1988) on 4.1.12; Darwall-Smith (1996) 121–122; Nauta (2002) 354.
[25] See Barchiesi (1997) 230–231.
[26] Barchiesi (1997) 20–21.

continua; 27 *quid tale … habebat?*). Domitian himself acquires the status of Jupiter-on-earth and the poem reinvigorates this commonplace of imperial ideology by having a god in awe of the consul.[27] Even in his own sanctuary, Janus prays to Domitian with outstretched arms (*supinas … manus*) and addresses him in Jovian terms (17 *magne parens mundi*). The language of Rome longing to see the emperor (18–19 *talem te cernere … | Roma cupit*) is that of mortal looking at a god (cf. *Silv.* 4.2.15–16) or a husband longing to see his wife (cf. Ov. *Ex P.* 1.4.49). Both god and city are entirely subordinated to the emperor.

Janus concentrates his focus on the new offices and conquests of the emperor. The verb *instaurare* (18) implies a renewal not just of the annual cycle, but also a grander scale of renovation. The phrase *saecula instaurare* suggests the renewal of *Ludi Saeculares* and is picked up in lines 37–38 (*mecum altera saecula condes, | et tibi longaevi renovabitur ara Tarenti*), where Janus anticipates Domitian celebrating a second Secular Games. The period that is defined as the longest span of human life (110 years) is therefore allotted again to Domitian.

Moreover, the specific allusion to the *Ludi Saeculares* is also couched in language that makes Domitian sound like a *conditor urbis*, another Romulus or Augustus, the city founder of Suetonius' biography or especially Augustus as Virgil's Anchises portrays him in his underworld revelation (*Aen.* 6.791–795):[28]

> hic vir, hic est, tibi quem promitti saepius audis,
> Augustus Caesar, divi genus, aurea condet
> saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arva
> Saturno quondam, super et Garamantas et Indos
> proferet imperium

Implicit in the process of historical renewal is physical renewal of Rome as a topographical landscape and renewal of the institutions that function within that landscape. Janus also anticipates future offices for Domitian (4.1.33–37):

> et quanta recusas,
> quanta vetas! flectere tamen precibusque senatus
> permittes hunc saepe diem. manet insuper ordo
> longior, et totidem felix tibi Roma curules
> terque quaterque dabit.

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[27] A neat reversal of Ovid's reaction to Janus' presence in *Fasti* 1.

[28] Cf. Lucr. 3.1090; Suet. *Aug.* 7.2.

Janus hopes especially for lots of ordinary consulships, so that the new year will begin this way many more times (19–20 *sic tempora nasci,* | *sic annos intrare decet*).[29] Yet Janus' words betray the vision of a new Roman era; these words suggest to the emperor that he should become a *consul perpetuus*. The implications for the future of Roman history are stark. Every year should be named after the emperor. In order to give constant rejoicing to the calendar (20–21 *da gaudia fastis* | *continua*) some of its traditional functions must be erased, at least in so far as *fasti* can be used to distinguish months and years. Domitian transcends the annalistic construction of history.

Janus continues to illustrate how Roman history will also be re-written in the new era. Janus asks Rome and History herself, the personified *Vetustas* (a force which in Lucan's epic destroyed the physical remains of Pompey's tomb now recalls Roman history, cf. Luc. 8.867–872), to review history in the light of Domitian's seventeenth (4.1.28–33):

> dic age, Roma potens, et mecum, longa Vetustas,
> dinumera fastos nec parva exempla recense,
> sed quae sola meus dignetur vincere Caesar.
> ter Latio deciesque tulit labentibus annis
> Augustus fasces, sed coepit sero mereri:
> tu iuvenis praegressus avos.

It seems odd that the oldest god (who was, at least in Ovid's formulation, once Chaos, *Fast.* 1.103)[30] should need help from such a personification. Janus is thus denuded of further authority and acts merely as the link between past and future. Roman history is reduced to a numbers game (*dinumera*) where the *fasti* which are sealed by the names of consuls are counted up. Most of Roman history can be discarded; as ever, it is Augustus who provides the only worthy comparison even if he loses out in terms of both quantity and quality (esp. 33 *praegressus avos*). The sense that Domitian overwrites history *tout court* is hammered home now. The emperor *is* Roman history, the only part worth remembering.

Janus completes his speech by anticipating a further role for this Domitianic mode of history in enumerating the trophies that Domitian will win in battle. Janus' celebration of future victories runs very much against the grain of his Ovidian counterpart, who avowedly had nothing

[29] Such sentiments are echoed by Statius in his own voice at *Silv*. 4.2.57–67.
[30] Barchiesi (1997) 232–233.

to do with war (*Fast.* 1.253 *nil mihi cum bello*) and who celebrated the peace that Germanicus established (1.285 *pax erat et, vestri, Germanice, causa triumphi*). Janus' catalogue of about-to-be-conquered nations is a familiar feature of imperial discourse where the emperor is praised for the foreign conquests he will complete in the near future. Such passages in the Augustan poets often display anxieties (about Parthia in particular) rather than Janus' wholehearted confidence. We can see this kind of disquiet in, for example, Horace's encouragement to Maecenas to take a break from the cares of state (depicted solely as foreign policy) and his advice underlined by the god's laughing at a mortal's excessive anxiety (*Odes* 3.29.25–32):

> tu civitatem quis deceat status
> curas et urbi sollicitus times
> quid Seres et regnata Cyro
> Bactra parent Tanaisque discors.
>
> prudens futuri temporis exitum
> caliginosa nocte premit deus
> ridetque, si mortalis ultra
> fas trepidat.

Such lists of putative foreign conquests are visible in the Neronian period as well. Lucan's epic poem of Caesarian civil war also reflects on how Roman lives might have been better spent in foreign conquests (1.13–20):

> heu, quantum terrae potuit pelagique parari
> hoc quem civiles hauserunt sanguine dextrae,
> unde venit Titan et nox ubi sidera condit
> quaque dies medius flagrantibus aestuat horis
> et qua bruma rigens ac nescia vere remitti
> astringit Scythico glacialem frigore pontum!
> sub iuga iam Seres, iam barbarus isset Araxes
> et gens siqua iacet nascenti conscia Nilo.

Yet unlike Horace's lyric poem, where Maecenas fretted over the machinations of foreign enemies, Statius' poem encourages its imperial addressee to foreign conquests; the god does not laugh at the weakness of men, but rather abdicates his own power, ceding it to Domitian and insisting on how much there is to do. Lucan's epic catalogue, meanwhile, is born of regret that so much of Rome's energy has been pressed into self-destructive conflict when so much of the world remains unconquered. Lucan's historical poem looks back in anger at the futility of Roman history while Statius' deconstruction of historical poetry takes the Flavians,

who brought Rome out of another civil conflict, forward into a new era of conquest. Observing these victories may be the only role left for the god to perform. The closing of the temple of Janus, narrated at the end of the poem (44 *sic Ianus … recepit*), was traditionally a signal that Rome was no longer at war. Here it allows the other gods to open their temple doors and celebrate their great leader, Domitian (45–47). The apparent paradox allows Domitian to imitate the likes of Titus Manlius Torquatus and Augustus, who famously closed the gates of the temple in 235 and 31 BC respectively. Yet the anticipated conquests allow the emperor to surpass these great predecessors. These are not victories that are hoped for, or may yet happen. These successes *will* happen, they are part of the historical record.

Statius' Janus plays a role seemingly much closer to that of the grand historical narrator. It is, after all, one of the central tasks of history to narrate wars and battles (indeed, Statius' poem does a clever job of narrating Roman history *domi militiaeque*, as an annalistic historian might) and that is just what Domitian's future-history will do (4.1.39–43):

> mille tropaea feres, tantum permitte triumphos.
> restat Bactra novis, restat Babylona tributis
> frenari; nondum gremio Iovis Indica laurus,
> nondum Arabes Seresque rogant, nondum omnis honorem
> annus habet, cupiuntque decem tua nomina menses.

You certainly have to go a long way to find something unconquered, but rest assured that Domitian will flatten the lot. Yet Janus ends by requesting a further erosion of his apparently limited power. This year may bear Domitian's name, as do September and October, but future years will only be guaranteed this privilege if Domitian takes further consulships, and ten months have yet to get their Domitianic names, including, of course, the month of January. It is a stunning abdication by the god. Such is the transformation of the existing calendrical landscape that the changes seem almost paradoxical. Those foreign conquests create difficult pictures for the reader of this poem and Domitian's year—will all months be named after the emperor, perhaps as he accumulates conquest-names? Will the year continue to begin in January at all? As the poem reaches a climax, we realise that our language is becoming inadequate for the task of writing the Roman future. World domination and military power are locked into the temporal control that Domitian acquires through his consulship.

Statius as Writer (of History): Re-placing History

The Rome that Statius and his mouthpiece Janus depict is, ultimately, a paradoxical one. As Janus ends his speech, he withdraws behind the now closed door of his sanctuary (4.1.46 *clausoque libens se poste recepit*). The use of *claudere* at this juncture provides the poem with a strong sense of closure, one which would be profoundly satisfying were this not the opening poem of a collection depicting the beginning of a new year and a new era. We get the sense that there is nothing left to say, but this notion of completeness is radically undercut by Statius' desire to continue speaking. Statius thus provides, I suggest, a hint at his own autonomy through this device. Statius sets up an absolutist sense of finality in a poem where the emperor is developed into a universal authority, only to destroy that authority by continuing to speak, in subsequent poems, in his own voice. The poet demonstrates that he has more power of his own than he is willing to let on. It is a theme that runs through Book 4 as a whole. As we noted earlier, Statius makes a great show of portraying this as a Domitianic super-*liber*, one far superior to his previous *opuscula*. Yet once we walk the Domitianic Road out of Rome in poem 4.3, the emperor disappears as a force in the collection as the poet turns to increasingly private and introspective themes. If the opening word of the epistolary preface to Book 4, *inveni*, suggests, as Coleman believes, "the editorial process of selection and arrangement,"[31] then Statius has carefully edited Domitian out of the latter two thirds of this collection. Moreover, Statius' adoption of an annalistic historical ideology in this poem is potentially disconcerting. Annalistic history's tendency to end a year with an obituary might also have powerful implications for a poem where an emperor's life and a state's history become identified with one another. Add to that the way the collection ends with a Saturnalia poem, inevitably recalling the way the first book of *Silvae* ends with Domitian's Saturnalia. Yet *Silvae* 4.9 is a very different kind of poem, addressed to Plotius Grypus and lacking the grand political themes of earlier works. We could construe this sequence as an aggressive rejection of imperial values, but I would prefer to see this as Statius' staking claim to his own authority, highlighting his ability and willingness to write of the emperor as and when it suits him and not vice versa.

[31] Coleman (1988) ad loc.

Finally, we note the emotional theme that runs through the poem from its first word to its concluding coda (1 *laeta*; 5 *exsultent … gaudete*; 6 *iactantior*; 10 *gaudet*; 25 *gaudent*; 45 *laeto … polo*). History will become in the future merely a means by which we may further exalt Domitian. All that is left at beginning and end is that one raw emotion of blissful happiness. History is written out of the record and replaced by something new. However, let us not get carried away. This is Statius writing, and hoping to write himself in as *the* voice of Domitian's regime. 4.1 also seeks to create a "replacing history" that constructs AD 95 as a turning point in world history, playing with notions of periodic and universal history, and practices of annalistic and historical epic, whilst recasting them in the form of short and apparently spontaneous hexameter poetry. 4.1 fits neatly into the genre game that all the poems of Book 4 play, by claiming for its novel form the right to replace other modes of historical discourse. Statius looks back to the Augustan era every bit as anxiously as does Domitian.

Nor should we separate the twin voices of Statius and Janus quite as far as I have done. The god is an interesting speaker, a double-headed reflection of both emperor's and poet's desires. Janus is not a simple mouthpiece for the poet. Domitian's order to Janus is the first hint that we may identify him more closely with Statius: *quem tu … omnia iussisti componere bella* (13–14) can be read as Domitian ordering Janus to cease all wars, but also as an instruction to behave like a poet and "compose" wars.[32] This is what Statius keeps apologising for not doing in every *recusatio*, that is to compose a martial, historical epic of the emperor's deeds.[33] Thus Janus' fervent wish, *sic tempora nasci, | sic annos intrare decet* (19–20), suggests that years should not only begin with Domitian as consul, but with Statius writing *this* kind of poem, replacing history as genre even as Domitian replaces history as a record of past events.[34]

The poem has one final surprise. 4.1 reveals the power of the poet in its portrayal of the real subject, Domitian himself. The emperor is, like his consular colleague, conspicuous by his virtual absence, metonymised as a star, a flame on an altar, a name carved on a calendar. He is monumentalised but inert, immobile, incapable of replying to or modifying

[32] *OLD* s.v. *compono* 2b, 'to lay aside'; 14, 'to subdue, quell'; 8, 'to compose, write', b 'to write a history.'

[33] See Rosati (2002).

[34] Minerva weaving endless purple togas (21–22) may have a similarly metapoetic impact, given the (especially Ovidian) connection between poetic composition and divine weaving. The *annos* that Jupiter gives in the final line may be literal annals.

anything that is said of him. This is a literary conceit, to be sure; Domitian's tyrannical control of authors was legendary. Yet Statius and Janus play the power game well, both making a feature of their humbleness before supreme authority, yet both reserving through their vocality and their ability to write Domitian's history a measure of their own authority. Such is the power in replacing history.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ERUPTION OF VESUVIUS IN THE *EPISTLES* OF STATIUS AND PLINY

Carole Newlands

> "passion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy . . . nor tells of rough satyrs and fauns with cloven heel. Where there is leisure for fiction there is little grief."
>
> Dr. Samuel Johnson (on *Lycidas*)

Introduction

Just a few months after the sinking of the Titanic Thomas Hardy wrote his poem on the disaster, "The Convergence of the Twain." I quote the first seven of the eleven stanzas:

   In a solitude of the sea
   Deep from human vanity
And the Pride of Life that planned her, stilly couches she.

II

   Steel chambers, late the pyres
   Of her salamandrine fires,
Cold currents thrid, and turn to rhythmic tidal lyres.

III

   Over the mirrors meant
   To glass the opulent
The sea-worm crawls—grotesque, slimed, dumb, indifferent.

IV

   Jewels in joy designed
   To ravish the sensuous mind
Lie lightless, all their sparkles bleared and black and blind.

V

Dim moon-eyed fishes near
Gaze at the gilded gear
And query: "What does this vaingloriousness down here?" . . .

VI

Well: while was fashioning
This creature of cleaving wing,
The Immanent Will that stirs and urges everything

VII

Prepared a sinister mate
For her—so gaily great—
A Shape of Ice, for the time far and dissociate.[1]

What is particularly striking about this poem is its economy of expression in the face of unimaginable horror.[2] Hardy avoids hyperbole, opting for a relatively sombre, ironical style and focussing first on the ship itself, not on its human cargo, and then on the iceberg as an unstoppable force of nature. Occasional, unusual diction, for example "salamandric" and "thrid" in stanza three, suggests the extraordinary. The poem is structured in two halves, divided between the ship and the iceberg, and turns at stanza 6 with the simple but brilliant choice of the word "well." Enjambment between stanzas 6 and 7 then hurries the poem towards its inevitable doom-laden conclusion. Hardy's poem demonstrates that brevity and understatement can sometimes provide a more powerful response to tragedies that are off the scale in human imagining than an aesthetics of grandeur, which runs the inevitable risk of descending to sentimentality and bathos. In historiography however, as Woodman has pointed out, magnification, vivid descriptiveness, and drama were core elements of the aesthetics of the "disaster narrative," often with a moralising discourse;[3] introducing his vivid account of the shipwreck of Germanicus' fleet in the North Sea, Tacitus for instance arouses his readers' expectations for tragic horror by commenting that it was of unusual magnitude and novelty (*Ann.* 2.24.1).[4] Yet, as Hardy's poem suggests, the

[1] Text from Gibson (2001) 306–308.

[2] See the discussion of this poem in Hynes (1961) 46–49.

[3] Woodman (1988) 23–40.

[4] See Courtney (1995) 315–319 on the epic fragment (23 hexameters) of Albinovanus Pedo describing Germanicus' ill-fated voyage into the North Sea; it is cited by Sen. *Suas.* 1.15 to illustrate a common declamatory theme, the wisdom of Alexander's exploration of the Ocean; see also Goodyear (1981) on Tac. *Ann.* 2.23–24 (though he concludes that

high style, whether in poetry or history, is not always the most effective approach for writing about tragic contemporary events, particularly *natural* disasters close to home that lack the explanation of human vice or folly and are overwhelming in their catastrophic dimensions. When words are inadequate to describe the sheer scale of a human and natural tragedy, only an aesthetics of decorum, perhaps, can confer dignity and perspective upon the inexplicable.

With this in mind, let me turn to the topic of my chapter, the response of Statius and Pliny to the greatest natural disaster of their time, the eruption of Vesuvius. In the ancient world there was little scientific writing about volcanoes;[5] instead, volcanoes were the testing ground for the true poet by which he reached epic heights.[6] Aetna on Sicily was the *locus classicus* of the active volcano for Greek and Roman poets such as Pindar, Lucretius and Virgil, since Vesuvius was believed to be long extinct.[7] Its eruption, then, in AD 79, in the Romans' backyard, so to speak, was an unexpected catastrophe for which, as with the attack on the Twin Towers in New York, writers seem to have had difficulty finding an appropriate response.

Ancient writers seemed aware of the problem, particularly those concerned with giving a rational, scientific explanation for the terrifying manifestations of nature's power. Conte has noted that though Lucretius often provides dramatic, epicising descriptions of frightening natural phenomena, such as the eruption of a volcano, these are also at the same time often accompanied by a lowering of the stylistic register; Lucretius resorts to "a counterpoint in *diminuendo*" with banal or everyday comparisons that attempt to control the terrifying experience.[8] Gareth Williams has developed this observation with reference to Seneca's treatment of earthquakes in Book 6 of the *Natural Questions*,[9] written in the aftermath of the earthquake that devastated Campania in 63.[10] He notes that Seneca attempts to place the devastation caused by earthquakes in "an alleviating perspective" that both rationalises it and casts it in a cosmic

Pedo's poem was not connected with Tacitus' passage on the dubious grounds that Tacitus would not have used an epic poem as a historical source).

5 Hine (2002) 56–75.

6 Sen. *Ep*. 79.5.

7 Plin. *Nat*. 3.62; Sherwin-White (1966) on Plin. *Ep*. 6.16.5.

8 Conte (1994) 152.

9 Williams (2006).

10 See Wallace-Hadrill (2003).

perspective—death is common to all living matter.[11] Such an approach is particularly effective when dealing not only with recent events but with those that have taken place on home territory; the author who indulges in the monstrosities and novelties of the grand style otherwise runs the risk of alienating his audience.

Our first literary response to the eruption of Vesuvius is an epigram of Martial, written about ten years after the event.[12] Martial adopts "the alleviating perspective" of epitaphic conventions; his response, as we shall see shortly, is terse, his mood resigned. In writing of Vesuvius, both Statius and Pliny found that the epistolary form instead allowed for an "alleviating perspective," derived in their case from the consoling intimacy of personal exchange. A letter is part of the currency of *amicitia*,[13] a special narrative form that shows particular awareness of the writer and the reader at all times; it creates emotional collusion with its audience while offering a self-interested construction of events and self.

Pliny's letters on the eruption, *Ep.* 6.16 and 6.20, were written around 106/7, thus almost thirty years after the event. They were composed for Tacitus as material for his *Histories*; according to Pliny, Tacitus asked for an account not of the eruption but of the death of Pliny's uncle, Pliny the Elder, while on a rescue mission across the bay. Pliny's first letter is an example of a burgeoning genre of imperial times, *exitus illustrium uirorum*, the deaths of famous men who often acted as martyrs either to a political cause, or, as here, to a heroic mission.[14] In *Ep.* 5.5.3 Pliny places this genre "between everyday speech and history" (*inter sermonem historiamque medios*),[15] a classification that might also characterise the epistolary form, which in the ancient world traditionally endorsed a plain style combined with the more elevated quality of literary charm.[16] By focussing moreover on one person, his uncle, rather than the thousands suffocated in volcanic fumes and ash, Pliny reduces the catastrophe to a human dimension. In these two letters on Vesuvius poetry and history converge; as Ash has argued, here Pliny pursues the aims and ideals of historiography while apparently rejecting its generic constraints.[17] Pliny

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11 Williams (2006) 125–126.

12 There are brief references to Vesuvius in similes at V. Fl. 3.208–209 and Sil. 17.593–596 (undatable). Other later references in Plut. *Pyth. Or.* 9; Tac. *Hist.* 1.2.2; *Ann.* 4.67.2.

13 Morello (2003).

14 Ash (2003) 222–224.

15 Text of Pliny's Letters from Mynors (1963).

16 See Harrison (1995) 57–61.

17 Ash (2003); also Augoustakis (2005).

begins his second letter with a quotation from the start of *Aen.* 2 (10–13), casting himself as Aeneas, a survivor who recoils from revisiting tragedy;[18] this Virgilian lens is refracted nonetheless by the more somber medium of prose and the informality of the epistolary form.

Statius' *Silvae*, published in 92 and 94,[19] offer us a view of Vesuvius that is closer in time to the catastrophe, though the relevant poems focus on the aftermath of the eruption. Although volcanoes were the traditional province of epic, in writing of Vesuvius Statius, like Pliny, opted in *Silv.* 3.5 and 4.4 for the epistolary form. Indeed in the preface to Book 3 Statius describes 3.5 as *sermo* "everyday speech" (3 *pr.* 21). Although Pliny's epistles on Vesuvius on the other hand aim for stylistic heightening, like Statius' epistles they do not abandon epistolary hallmarks such as autobiographical details and intimate personal address. And unlike in Dio's later colourful account of the eruption (66.21–22), both authors mostly avoid mythical allusions to portents and the anger of the gods. The letter, a humbler literary form than historiography or epic but one with pretensions, as Cicero, Horace, Ovid and Seneca had demonstrated, allowed Statius and Pliny a certain poetic freedom in narrating recent events; the epistle blurs the boundary between poetry and history, fiction and plain-speaking.

Although my immediate focus in this chapter is two of the *Silvae*, their analysis here is directed to showing how the letter, which can appear within poetry or prose, constitutes common ground between Statius in the *Silvae* and Pliny in the *Epistles*. I shall suggest that for Statius as well as for Pliny the letter, with its personal address and focus on the author, provided an effective format for writing of recent history, for it allowed a catastrophe of superhuman dimensions to be both vividly described in an eyewitness account and also reined in within human bounds. Only an aesthetics of decorum could address an event of this sort without sensationalism or bathos. The relatively weak canonical status of the *Silvae* has tended to militate against a comparison of this kind. But, as I shall suggest at the end of this chapter, the writings of Statius and Pliny on Vesuvius point to a closer association between the two writers, for the *Silvae* and the *Epistles* are works that deal with contemporary history, presented not in a grand narrative but as a series of isolated occasions. Both writers share a significant interest in the development

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[18] Berry (2008) 302–307.

[19] On the publication of the *Silvae*, first Books 1–3 as a set, then Book 4, see Coleman (1988) xvi–xx.

of "the occasional literary form" as the ideal medium for describing and coming to terms with contemporary or recent historical events. And both furthermore discreetly take advantage of opportunity the letter offers for self-promotion, particularly in the case of Vesuvius.[20]

Martial on Vesuvius

As a starting point, and a point of comparison, let us look briefly at the first literary account of the eruption of Vesuvius, Martial, 4.44, published about ten years after the eruption:

> hic est pampineis viridis modo Vesbius umbris,
> presserat hic madidos nobilis uva lacus:
> haec iuga quam Nysae colles plus Bacchus amavit,
> hoc nuper Satyri monte dedere choros.
> haec Veneris sedes, Lacedaemone gratior illi,
> hic locus Herculeo nomine clarus erat.
> cuncta iacent flammis et tristi mersa favilla:
> nec superi vellent hoc licuisse sibi.[21]

This poem belongs to a popular Hellenistic genre, the epideictic epigram on the collapse of famous cities that was related to the epitaph, for instance *AP* 9. 62 on Troy.[22] Such epigrams lamented glories that were long past. Martial's epigram is highly unusual in responding to a recent event. It is constructed on the contrast between "then and now," between a pastoral past with protective gods and sportive satyrs, and present devastation. Polyptoton (*hic, hic, haec, hoc, haec, hic*) structures the contrast, with the concluding *hic* (6) of this sequence followed by the switch in tense and thought to the tragic present and the final, resigned *hoc*. The imagery of the last two lines is funerary, with the epitaphic *iacent* (7) and the mention of flames, ash and burial. Greek epigrams on the ruins of cities are often spoken in the first person, by the city itself. Martial writes an epitaph for the stricken region, thus universalising the catastrophe within the context of the inevitability of death.

Like Statius and Pliny after him, Martial opts for a short, "humble" literary form, in this case the epigram, which allows him to approach the disaster with the terseness we found in Hardy. Like Hardy too he

[20] Traub (1955) 218–219 in passing noted an affiliation between Statius and Pliny, but only in what he regarded as their mechanically rhetorical approach to literary genre.

[21] Text from Watson and Watson (2003).

[22] Watson and Watson (2003) 333. See also *AP* 9. 423–427.

does not refer to the loss of human lives; neuter *cuncta* (7) elides the human tragedy. Campania is presented as a land loved by the gods, which even they however were mysteriously unwilling to save from nature's inexplicable power. But he also creates a distancing effect by the use of myth and of the impersonal third-person voice; Greek epigrams on ruined cities normally used the first-person voice but Martial, usually so vividly present in his epigrams, is here strikingly absent.

Statius on Vesuvius

Like Martial, Statius uses Vesuvius to reflect upon the tragic contrast between past and present, but he also takes a long and more optimistic view of the region's ability to regenerate, and he connects the mountain with his own personal development as a writer. For Martial *hic* (6) marks the contrast between past and present time as well as place; he directs the reader's attention to the burial of Pompeii and Herculaneum. But in the *Silvae* Statius presents himself as the poet of technological progress with a particularly imperial confidence in human ability to master nature.[23] Naples is his hometown;[24] he has first-hand experience of the volcano's menace. This is where he, like Pliny at a certain point of his career, chooses to live and work. Statius uses Vesuvius to assert his confidence in the region's renewal, a theme that is connected also with his own poetic renewal; the epistles that refer to Vesuvius were written at a turning point of Statius' career, when he had just finished the *Thebaid* and had decided to leave Rome for Naples.

Let us now turn to the poetic epistles, first of all *Silvae* 3.5, a letter to his wife inviting her to leave Rome and relocate with him to Naples, his hometown (72–74). In the preface to Book 3 Statius refers to this poem as *sermo*, "everyday speech" (3 *pr.* 21). Modesty is a feature of Statius' prefaces, a means among others of deflecting criticism from this new, experimental poetry.[25] But this "modest" epistle is also the conclusion to Book 3 and to the first publication of *Silvae*.[26] From the poem's start it is clear that Statius is following Ovid as his chief epistolary model; his wife is both a troublesome partner with a worryingly unmarried daughter

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[23] See Pavlovskis (1973).
[24] Statius was born in Naples (3.5.106–109). On his 'life' see Hardie (1983) 5–14.
[25] See Newlands (2008).
[26] See note 19.

(54–71), and a Penelope, the heroine of the first of Ovid's *Heroides* (3.5.8–10);[27] Statius plays too on the situation of Ovid's exile poetry by inverting it, for he voluntarily seeks separation from Rome.[28] The letter supposes that his wife, wishing to find a suitable husband for her daughter, is reluctant to leave the capital city; the personal situation provides the occasion for an encomium of Naples (3.5.72–109) that begins with the assurance that the region is now in recovery from Vesuvius' wrath (72–74):

> non adeo Vesuvinus apex et flammea diri
> montis hiems trepidas exhausit civibus urbes:
> stant populisque vigent.[29]

In the first instance Vesuvius has become a manipulative tool in the letter aimed at calming the fears of Statius' wife about living in Naples. Clearly an epic description of Vesuvius in flames would not suit the persuasive ends of this letter! But his wife also serves here as a model reader for Statius' wider readership. These lines are possibly a response to Martial's epigram; the proud, brief assertiveness of line 74 *stant populisque vigent* corrects Martial's penultimate line *cuncta iacent*. Statius takes the partisan perspective of the person who was born and raised in Naples. He acknowledges the threat of Vesuvius, "dread mountain with a storm of flame" (72–73), but places it in an "alleviating perspective," relegating it to one past event within a long pattern of civilised development in the region that goes back to Trojan times (74–80). Naples too has all the cultural amenities of Rome without Rome's stress (85–94); Stabiae, the site where Pliny the Elder met his death, has been "reborn" (3.5.104), an image of regeneration. In his proposed move from Rome to Naples, Statius suggests confidence in the region's tranquillity, *pax secura locis* ("there is peace without anxiety here," 85).

The published encomium of Naples thus offers public reassurance that after some twelve years or so the region is in economic and cultural recovery.[30] (We get a different view from Tacitus (*Ann.* 4.67.2), who writes of the Bay of Naples as *pulcherrimum sinum, antequam Vesuvius mons ardescens faciem loci verteret.*) This concluding poem complements the first poem of Book 3, which describes the building of Pollius Felix's

[27] Cf. also 3.5.44–51, an extended comparison of Statius' wife to faithful women of long ago (*ueteres … heroidas*, 45).
[28] See Newlands (2009) 396–398.
[29] Text from Courtney (1992).
[30] On "sincerity" as a key feature of the letter writer see Kennedy (2002) 222–223.

new temple to Hercules on the grounds of his villa in Sorrento, on the southern peninsula of the Bay of Naples (3.1). Herculaneum may be buried under volcanic ash but the god still visits the area to participate in magnificent new building (3.1.19–22; 125–138). 3.5 broadens the poet's perspective to include the entire region, thus framing the book with images of regeneration. Statius' persuasion of his wife invites the broader emotional collusion of his readership. The final poem of the first publication of *Silvae* ends with resounding praise of Statius' home region; he is a Neapolitan, and Vesuvius is key to his poetic self-definition.

The connection between regional and poetic renewal and identity becomes clearer in 4.4, also an epistle. The first collection of *Silvae* has been published to mixed reviews (4 *pr.* 24–34); with the *Thebaid* also completed (4.4.87–92), Statius is now meditating another major work, a second epic. The addressee of this letter, Vitorius Marcellus, was of high status, like Pliny's Tacitus; praetor in 95, the year in which this letter was written, he was also a man of literary interests to whom Quintilian dedicated his *Institutio Oratoria*.[31] 4.4 thus has a marked literary cast, both in its poetic allusions and in its concern with Statius' career. Vesuvius here plays an important role in defining Statius as poet and charting the trajectory of his career (78–86):

> haec ego Chalcidicis ad te, Marcelle, sonabam
> litoribus, fractas ubi Vesuius erigit iras
> aemula Trinacriis volvens incendia flammis.
> mira fides! credetne virum ventura propago,
> cum segetes iterum, cum iam haec deserta virebunt,
> infra urbes populosque premi proavitaque † toto †
> rura abisse mari? necdum letale minari
> cessat apex. procul ista tuo sint fata Teate
> nec Marrucinos agat haec insania montes.

The initial *haec* refers to a special poem composed for Vitorius, inset within the poetic epistle and now concluded (4.4.12–77). The reference to the volcano, the ultimate poetic theme, is excluded from this inset poem but belongs to the epistle proper. In bracketing off Vesuvius in this manner, Statius seems to imply that the volcano requires another form of discourse—even though, as he says (79–80), Vesuvius' flames challenge those of Aetna, the mountain of sublime poetry. The references to the mountain's threats frame these nine lines in personal terms: they provide the backdrop for Statius' poetic composition (79–80), and the basis for

31 Coleman (1988) 135–137.

his friendly hope that the mountains around Marcellus' home town of Teate will not exhibit such "madness" (85–86).

Whereas Martial in his epigram contrasted the idyllic past with the horrifying present, Statius here contrasts the threatening present and the happier future; the shift to the reaction of future generations (81–84) implies that life will carry on, that the region will recover and will be productive land once more. Although he mentions the buried cities and peoples, he does so to make an optimistic prediction, not to work up horror. *mira fides* (81) is surprising: normally the language of the miraculous is applied to the terrors and sublimities of nature, but here it is the future recovery of the land that is to be wondered at. *fides*, essentially antithetical to *mira*, grounds the future change in the cosmic surety of natural and human powers of regeneration; the gods have nothing to do with this recovery.

These lines are very Virgilian. Statius echoes the end of *G.* 1 (493–497) where Virgil predicts a time will come when a farmer will uncover the huge weapons and bones from the civil war and gaze at them in wonder (497 *mirabitur*). But Statius' passage is without the Virgilian moralising discourse that often accompanies tragedies caused by human folly and vice—by contrast Tacitus at the start of the *Histories* associates natural disasters such as the eruption of Vesuvius with moral and political decline (*Hist.* 1.2). *mira fides* takes a very imperial view of the eruption and its aftermath as a marvel of nature whose inexplicable, destructive force nonetheless can be contained, classified, and overcome. Statius treats the eruption of Vesuvius with decorum, as a natural disaster that can nonetheless be accommodated to the consoling pattern of regeneration.

The opening *haec ... sonabam* also draws attention to Statius' activities as poet, for he alludes again to Virgil's *Georgics*, here the end of Book 4 (559–566), where Virgil surveys his poetic career in contrast to the military exploits of Caesar "thundering on the Euphrates" (560–561); *haec ... canebam* (559) opens this passage of Virgilian self-reflection. For Statius the wrath of Vesuvius substitutes for "thundering Caesar;" for Virgil relaxing in Neapolitan ease (*G.* 4. 563–564 *me ... dulcis alebat* | *Parthenope studiis florentem ignobilis oti*), we find Statius boldly composing poetry while Vesuvius still menaces with flames.[32] How one responds

[32] True, earlier he locates himself at Virgil's tomb outside Naples (49–55), strumming the lyre with *ignauo pollice* (53); but this passage ends with his poetic arousal (55 *sumo animum*). These lines (53–55) locate him at a moment of transition in his poetic career, between epics.

to Vesuvius, as well as how one writes about it, is a key factor in a writer's self-definition and quest for glory, aims that Berry has recently shown are central to Pliny's Vesuvius letters.[33] Vesuvius then gives a heroic cast to Statius' poetic activities. In a similar way perhaps, Pliny's obdurate reading of Livy while the earth shakes and the sky darkens around him reveals his heroic tenacity (6.20.5).[34]

Coleman has argued that these Virgilian reminiscences present Statius as a second Virgil.[35] Rather, writing in a non-Virgilian genre, Statius draws here upon a classic passage of Virgilian poetic self-definition to create a distinct and provocative literary persona. Unlike Virgil he was a native of Naples; unlike Virgil too, for whom the autobiographical end of the *Georgics* marked a turning point in his career towards Rome and national epic, Statius, also at a turning point in his career, follows his description of Vesuvius with a discussion of his poetic achievement to date and his reluctance to accede to imperial pressure to write an epic of Domitian's deeds (87–100). Grand, menacing Vesuvius forms an appropriate backdrop for the poet who has started on a second epic, the *Achilleid* (93–94), fashioning him as a writer who, unlike Virgil, courts danger; but it also locates him firmly in the region of Naples, not in Rome.

Moreover, this epistle shows its Ovidian as well as its Virgilian affiliations and reveals the complex authorial persona of Statius, composer of both epideictic, occasional poetry and of epic.[36] The road along which the epistle swiftly travels (1–10) is celebrated in the preceding poem (4.3) as one of Domitian's major public works, built to shorten the journey from Rome to the Bay of Naples. The letter is personified in Ovidian terms as a willing courier travelling in Statius' stead to Rome.[37] The swift travel of the letter discreetly compliments the emperor even as it charts the poet's psychological as well as physical distance from Rome; the opening *curre* (4.4.1) is a reminder that *Silvae*, unlike epic, embrace an aesthetics of speed.[38] Statius' addressee Marcellus, as a man of letters and politician, bridges the gap between literature and politics; his acceptance of the letter and its subsequent publication thus plays an important role in tacitly

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[33] Berry (2008).

[34] Berry (2008) 308.

[35] Coleman (1988) on 4.4.78. Virgilian influence is also flagged by the rare epithet *Chalcidicus*, which was introduced to poetry by Virgil (*Ecl.* 10.50, *Aen.* 6.17) and adopted by Statius at *Silv.* 2.2.94, then 4.3.118; 4.4.78; 5.3.182, 226.

[36] Newlands (2009) 396–398.

[37] Cf. Ov. *Tr.* 1.1; 3.1.

[38] See e.g. *Silv.* 1 *pr.* 2–4, 11–15.

endorsing not only Statius' new experimental genre of *Silvae* but also his ultimate refusal to write contemporary historical epic.

For Statius and Pliny, Vesuvius is key to their self-definition as writers experimenting with so-called minor literary genres. The "miniaturization"[39] and segmentation of history in an individual poem or letter allowed them to write with concentrated vividness and pathos of Vesuvius while bringing the catastrophe within human bounds. Even as their description of the volcano observes a certain decorum, they themselves gain prestige from their heroic encounters with Vesuvius' menace.

These examples from the *Silvae* are brief, but it is perhaps significant that the only two letters within the *Silvae* refer to Vesuvius, as if the intimacy of the epistle gave Statius licence to write of a natural disaster that deeply affected his home region without distorting or distancing the event through an epicising style and myth; his personal connection with the Bay of Naples moreover makes Vesuvius a key element in his self-definition, as the poet both of *Silvae* and of epic. These examples then I believe are suggestive for the broader relationship between Pliny and Statius that I wish to pursue in the final part of my chapter.

Pliny the Younger and Statius

To some extent the presence of Statius senior overshadows Statius' poetry much as the presence of Pliny the Elder overshadows his nephew's letters. Both elder men were prominent literary figures who provided models for their protégés to emulate and also avoid; indeed Pliny's uncle was his adoptive father (*Ep.* 5.8.5). Both Pliny the Elder and Statius senior wrote works of recent history, Pliny the Elder a continuation of the work of the historian Aufidius Bassus up to the time of the Flavians (*Ep.* 3.5.6); Statius senior, according to a later passage in 5.3, a poem on the burning of the Capitoline during the civil war of 70; he was planning too to write a poem on the eruption of Vesuvius (5.3.195–208). The Gigantomachic language in which the poem on the civil war is described—"Phlegraean battles" (196–197), thunderbolts and flames (199–202)—leads naturally into the following proposed poem on the volcano with its fires and powerful Jupiter, blamed for the catastrophe (205–208):

[39] Thus Ash (2003) 224.

> iamque et flere pio Vesuvina incendia cantu
> mens erat et gemitum patriis impendere damnis,
> cum Pater exemptum terris ad sidera montem
> sustulit et late miseras deiecit in urbes.

Statius senior seems to have written in a high style about contemporary events, probably too in Greek.[40] Here in the description of the father's planned poem on the eruption of Vesuvius we find finally reference to the gods' anger, an epic theme (207–208). Statius senior's approach also is sentimental (*flere*, *gemitum*), an approach that his son avoids in referring to Vesuvius.

Neither Statius nor Pliny followed their father figures in writing recent history in the high style, whether for political reasons—the sensitivity of the material, the dangers involved—or for aesthetic reasons.[41] Pliny the Elder makes a point of saying that his continuation of Aufidius Bassus' Roman history in 31 books to the Flavian era was too sensitive to publish in his lifetime (*Nat. praef.* 20); in his list of his uncle's works his son mentions this history discreetly without comment.[42] Instead, for treating contemporary events, Pliny the Younger and Statius developed forms that can be described as occasional, *Silvae* (which include, as we have seen, two poetic epistles) and the prose epistle, forms published under the protection of an addressee or patron/friend and that assume modesty as a significant topos. For instance, at the end of the two Vesuvius letters Pliny makes modest disclaimers about his narrative and their lack of importance as history (6.16.21–22; 6.20.20). Indeed modesty is made part of Pliny's epistolary programme in his preface when he claims (disingenuously) that his collections of letters were put together in books just as the letters came to hand, without conscious design therefore; they are not meant as history (*Ep.* 1.1): *collegi non servato temporis ordine (neque enim historiam componebam) sed ut quaeque in manus venerat.*[43] Compare here Statius who talks in the first preface to the *Silvae* of his poems as *hos libellos, qui mihi subito calore et quadam festinandi voluptate fluxerunt* (1 *pr.* 2–4). Modesty, Tzounakas has argued, was a

[40] On the parallels between the two poems suggested by Statius' phraseology see Hardie (1983) 204 n. 81.

[41] *Ep.* 5.8 reflects on the dangers of writing recent history; see Henderson (2002). Apart from the early, mysterious *de bello Germanico*, Statius adhered to mythological epic.

[42] Henderson (2002) 281.

[43] Pliny of course also indulges in self-praise in the letters; but, as Gibson (2003) has shown, self-praise allows Pliny control over the reception of his achievements and shows a traditional commitment to being valued by his community.

political as well as a literary strategy under the principate.[44] But, precisely because of its key tropes of informality and modesty, the epistle is also particularly effective in responding to the catastrophe of Vesuvius, for the personal voice, engaged directly with addressee and wider readership, lends authenticity and directness to the described experience without sentimentality or sensationalism.

Of course modesty is also a rhetorical ploy that harbours deep literary ambitions. Fantham has characterised the first century AD by its "transfusion of genres" which involved in particular the breakdown of the barriers between prose and poetry.[45] The epistle itself, as Kennedy has argued, particularly renders generic categories permeable.[46] In the epistolary mode "transfusion" created dynamic and versatile literary forms—essentially literary hybrids—that allowed Pliny and Statius, with ostensible modesty, to pursue what we might think of as historical aims, the perpetuation of memory, not least the writer's own, as Pliny in *Ep.* 5.8.1 comments: *mihi pulchrum in primis videtur non pati occidere quibus aeternitas debeatur, aliorumque famam cum sua extendere*. The letter, the most personal of literary forms, yet with its sights set on a wider, enduring readership, elevates the occasional event and its author. Indeed, in an era of uncertain patronage from the imperial court, occasional literature, shaped by topoi of modesty and informality and rooted in a protective social system of friendship and reciprocity, provided perhaps a surer guarantee of lasting fame—both for the events recorded and for the writer—than the sustained epic or historiographical project. While Pliny's two letters on Vesuvius announce his affiliation to Tacitus, the latter was possibly still better known as an advocate than as a historian; as Berry points out, Pliny writes as one legal orator to another.[47]

There are of course obvious differences between Statius the poet and Pliny the letter writer in their approach to the eruption of Vesuvius. Statius is poet of the aftermath. He can take therefore a longer, consolatory view; through the influence of funerary epigram, combined with the personal voice of the epistle, the eruption becomes accommodated to a broad human and cosmic perspective that accepts the changeability of human existence, a consolatory theme. His close personal identification

[44] Tzounakas (2007) 42–54.
[45] Fantham (1996) 93–94; 166–167.
[46] Kennedy (2002) 220.
[47] Berry (2008) 298–299. Tacitus had at this time shown his interest in generic experimentation with the *Agricola* and *Germania* and perhaps the *Dialogus*.

with the region also gives an aggressive, partisan dimension to his verse on Vesuvius.

Yet there also are obvious similarities between the two writers; indeed Pliny seems to have had a special affinity with Statius. Pliny's debt to Statius' *Silvae* goes beyond the topoi associated with occasionality. Both are deeply concerned with the arrangement of their occasional pieces within the book as a whole.[48] Martial and Statius are the first poets to preface their poetic works with a prose epistle;[49] in addition to their function of dedicating each poetry book to a distinguished friend, Statius' prefaces fix the arrangement of each book for posterity by outlining its contents and announcing the order of the poems.[50] Both Pliny and Statius also, as we have seen, play in their prefaces on the topos of modesty, of casual composition or collection. Gaertner has pointed out that Pliny's reference in his first epistle to a haphazard arrangement of the letters very possibly alludes to the closing lines of Ovid's *Epistulae ex Ponto* (3.9.51–54), a sign of the influence of poetry upon the most "prosaic" of introductions to Pliny's work;[51] Pliny may also be acknowledging the influence of Statius' prose prefatory epistles to the *Silvae*, which likewise cultivate a misleading idea of artlessness.[52] Moreover both Pliny and Statius share an interest in art, villas, and poetics. In particular, Pliny adopts from Statius the innovation of the villa description and devotes entire epistles to detailed architectural ecphrasis;[53] both writers show considerable descriptive power. Even the structure of Book 3 is modelled in part on *Silvae* 4.[54]

In addition, the autobiographical construction of their lives is somewhat similar in that Statius senior, a citizen of Naples, and Pliny the Elder, who died in the eruption, bulk large in their works, providing literary models against which their biological and literary "offspring" can define themselves. Statius even implicates his father in the eruption of

[48] See Gibson and Morello (2011) chapter 2; also Marchesi (2008).

[49] Janson (1964) 107–112. Martial provides a preface selectively (Books 1, 2, 8, 9, 12), Statius with all four books of the *Silvae* published in his lifetime; the posthumous Book 5 has a prefatory letter for 5.1 only. See the comprehensive study of Johannsen (2006).

[50] Newlands (2008).

[51] Gaertner (2005) 2.

[52] See Pagán 2009 for a systematic study of the relationships between Pliny's and Statius' prefaces.

[53] *Ep*. 2.17, 5.6; cf. *Silv*.1.3, 2.2, 3.1; Myers (2005) 111–112.

[54] The particular pattern of Book 3, with the letter on the statue flanked by letters on Martial and Silius, duplicates *Silv*. 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, a poem on a statue flanked by odes concerned with poetics.

Vesuvius as a gesture of homage but also of self-promotion. In 5.3, published after Statius' death,[55] Statius summons Parthenope, the Siren who was the mythical patron of Naples, from the half-buried city to pay tribute to his poet father. Covered in ash, her hair burned, she is both mourner of Statius' father and a metonymic figure for the damaged city, which, as her arousal suggests, will however recover (5.3.104–106):

> exsere semirutos subito de pulvere vultus,
> Parthenope, crinemque adflato monte sepultum
> pone super tumulos et magni funus alumni.

These lines open with the graphic image of the Siren struggling to raise her ghastly "half-ruined" face above the city's ashes. She makes the epic gesture of laying a lock of her hair on the tomb of Statius' father,[56] just as Achilles had dedicated a lock of his hair to Patroclus in *Iliad* 23 (138–153), a possible acknowledgment of the poetry that Statius senior wrote in epic style.[57] At the same time, the brevity of the lines and the funerary imagery (*semirutos, pulvere, sepultum, tumulum, funus*), clearly have an epitaphic quality. With this vivid, emotional personification, Statius blurs the boundaries between myth and contemporary events, poetry and history. Although his father, unlike Pliny's uncle, did not die in the eruption, he gains vicarious glory here from association with the damaged city. Moreover, while the very arousal of Parthenope to mourn and commemorate Statius' father yet again acknowledges the possibility of regeneration for the stricken city, not least through literature, the glorification of the father here as Naples' famous *alumnus* also redounds on the son, a strategy exploited to the full in Pliny's letters on his uncle's death and his own heroic survival.

Conclusion

Disasters tend to evoke bad occasional poetry.[58] The *Aetna* poet, who probably composed his poem in roughly the middle of the first century AD, ends his poem with a satirical description of a poet fleeing an

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[55] On the publication and dating of the posthumous *Silvae* 5 see Gibson (2006) xxviii–xxx.

[56] See Gibson (2006) on the textual problem of 5.3.105.

[57] Hardie (1983) 7–8; 12–13.

[58] A notable case in point is "The Tay Road Bridge Disaster" by the Victorian Scottish poet William McGonagall, who takes the tragic theme to the unfortunate point of hilarity.

eruption, only to be killed when his flight was impeded by the burden of the weighty poems he was carrying in his escape (617): *defectum raptis illum sua carmina tardant.* We can see this incident perhaps as a self-ironising comment on the grandiose style conventionally demanded of vulcanic poetry. And we can also read it—anachronistically of course—as an allegory of the advantages of the aesthetics of decorum pursued by Statius and Pliny.

In this chapter I have suggested that the ways in which Pliny and Statius handle the eruption of Vesuvius show that the epistle was an ideal, flexible medium for writing about recent history in the imperial age. It offered the benefits of the enhancement of the personal voice; the emotional collusion with the addressee and the wider readership; the vividness of a narrative that does not, however, for the most part, stray into sensationalism or bathos and generally avoids mythical colouring; an attenuated style that can nonetheless be elevated and graphically descriptive. Compact, segmented recent history, offered to a kindly, supportive friend, provided these writers, moreover, with protection in uncertain times. Both writers, in short, pursued in the case of Vesuvius an aesthetics of decorum while using the eruption for literary self-reflection and promotion. Taking on Vesuvius, moreover, allowed them to stray onto territory that their "father figures" had already explored, and to stake out their own independent claim to fame. Pliny's *Epistles* indeed, though written in prose, are arguably the most immediate heirs of the *Silvae* in Latin literature.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FROM SALLUST TO SILIUS ITALICUS: *METVS HOSTILIS* AND THE FALL OF ROME IN THE *PUNICA*[*]

John Jacobs

Introduction: From Sallust to Silius Italicus

The notion that Rome benefitted from the 'fear' of a strong external 'enemy' (*metus hostilis*) may have originated in the debate in the Roman Senate between M. Porcius Cato and P. Cornelius Scipio Nasica over the fate of Carthage just before the outbreak of the Third Punic War in 149 BC.[1] Cato is said to have argued that the city "must be destroyed" (*Carthago delenda est*), while Scipio is said to have countered that the city "must be preserved" (*Carthago servanda est*). In reality, this debate concerned not the fate of Carthage, but that of Rome: the point at issue was whether Rome needed to destroy or to preserve Carthage in order to preserve her own existence. In essence, this *metus hostilis* functioned according to the law of reciprocity, which, in this case, predicated that the two cities must either stand or fall together. (Scipio was right, not Cato.) This law of reciprocity is itself reflected in the inherent grammatical ambivalence of the phrase *metus hostilis*, since the adjective bears both an active and a passive sense, as evidenced by A. Gellius' explanation of the subjective and objective uses of the genitive in the grammatically equivalent phrase *metus hostium* (9.12.13): *nam 'metus hostium' recte dicitur, et cum timent hostes et cum timentur* ("For, the phrase *metus hostium* ['fear of the enemies'] is correctly said, both when the enemies fear and when they are feared," cf. 9.12.13–16 in general).

* I would like to thank the conference participants for their insightful remarks and comments during the session.

[1] The many problems surrounding the historicity of this debate have long attracted the attention of scholars, including Gelzer (1931); Little (1934); Adcock (1946); Thürlemann-Rapperswil (1974); Vogel-Weidemann (1989); and Welwei (1989).

Whatever its origins, the *metus hostilis* became a powerful cultural idea, with deep roots in ancient political theory, as well as in ancient conceptions about the rise and fall of states (e.g. Plb. 6.57.1–9). In its evolution, separate phases came to be identified, beginning with the *metus Etruscus* under the Monarchy, and continuing with the *metus Gallicus* and the *metus Punicus* under the Republic.[2] It is Sallust, however, who codifies the *metus hostilis* as the central force in the history, as well as in the historiography, of the *imperium Romanum*, in a series of passages which span all three of his major works, including the *Catiline* (6–13), the *Jugurtha* (41–42), and the *Histories* (1.11–16 Maurenbrecher).[3] Through his analysis of the rise and fall of Rome, Sallust traces the city's descent from *virtus* into *luxuria*, and directly associates this moral and political decline with the fall of Carthage at the end of the Third Punic War in 146 BC. Indeed, in all three passages, Sallust famously identifies this event as the περιπέτεια or 'turning point' in the history (and historiography) of the *res publica*.[4] In assigning the fall of Carthage this honor, he capitalizes on the fundamental paradox that it was Rome's victory over Carthage in *bellum externum* which put the city on the path to (self-inflicted, i.e. suicidal) defeat in *bellum civile*.

Sallust's presentation of the *metus hostilis*, especially his identification of the fall of Carthage in 146 BC as the περιπέτεια, looms large in all subsequent historiography. In the absence of Livy's sixth decade, his narrative of the fall of Carthage and its effect on Rome, it is impossible to ascertain what Livy made of Sallust's argument.[5] However, the fall of the city does begin the sixth decade, just as the fall of Saguntum (at the beginning of the Second Punic War in 218 BC) begins the third: this structural parallel suggests at least the possibility of a thematic parallel between the two sieges.[6] Elsewhere, Livy identifies other events as 'turning points' in

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[2] For the *metus hostilis* in general, see Bellen (1985).

[3] See Earl (1961), esp. 13–16 and 41–59.

[4] *Cat.* 10, esp. 10.1 (*Carthago aemula imperi Romani ab stirpe interiit*), cf. 11, esp. 11.4–8; *Jug.* 41.1–5, esp. 41.2 (*ante Carthaginem deletam* and *metus hostilis in bonis artibus civitatem retinebat*) ~ 41.3 (*sed ubi illa formido mentibus decessit, …*); and *Hist.* 1.11 (*post Carthaginis excidium*) and 1.12 (*postquam remoto metu Punico*), cf. 1.16 (*ex quo tempore*) ~ *Cat.* 11.4–8.

[5] The later *periocha* for Book 51 offers a brief narrative of the event, but no interpretation of it.

[6] Interestingly, the *periocha* for Book 21 uses exactly the same language to describe the siege and fall of Saguntum as that which the *periocha* for Book 51 uses to describe the siege and fall of Carthage: *belli Punici secundi ortum narrat et Hannibalis, ducis Poenorum, contra foedus per Hiberum flumen transitum. a quo* ***Saguntum***, ⟨*sociorum*⟩

the moral and political decline of Rome, including the display of *luxuria* rather than *uirtus* during Cn. Manlius Vulso's extravagant triumph for his victory over the Galatians in 187 BC (39.6.3–7.5). In contrast, Velleius Paterculus faithfully adheres to Sallust's interpretation of the fall of Carthage, dividing his two-book history of Rome at 146 BC (1.12.2–7 ~ 2.1–3), and adopting a similar model of decline.[7] Later, Florus likewise follows this interpretation, dividing his two-book history of Rome's wars into *bella externa* (Book 1) and *bella civilia* (Book 2), and, again, adopting a similar model of decline (1.47). In short, the preponderance of the evidence supports the assertion that Sallust's conception of Roman history, with its focus on the pivotal importance of the fall of Carthage in 146 BC, exerted a profound influence on the later development of the historiographical tradition, from Livy to Velleius Paterculus to Florus and beyond.

In an interesting and, apparently, overlooked passage in his *Facta et dicta memorabilia*, Valerius Maximus associates the *metus hostilis* and the seeds of Roman decline not with the end of the Third Punic War, but with that of the Second. During the debate in the Roman Senate over the terms of peace at the end of the war in 201 BC, Q. Caecilius Metellus, who had served as consul earlier in 206, "averred that, after the defeat of Carthage, he did not know whether that victory would bring more good or evil to the state," since Hannibal's presence in Italy had kept the city on constant alert (7.2.3 *devicta Carthagine nescire se illa victoria bonine plus an mali rei publicae attulisset adseveravit*). Appian, who also reports the debate (*Lib.* 65.290–291), does not assign this opinion to Metellus specifically; instead, he simply comments that such a sentiment was in the air. At the end of his report, however, Appian does claim that M. Porcius Cato later attributed the notion to none other than P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus. Regardless of its attribution, this transference of the *metus hostilis* debate from the era of the Third Punic War to that of the Second testifies to

populi R. civitas, ***obsessa*** *octavo mense* ***capta est*** ("He [Livy] narrates the beginning of the Second Punic War and the crossing of the Ebro River, contrary to the terms of the treaty, by Hannibal, the general of the Carthaginians. By him [Hannibal] **Saguntum**, a state of allies of the Roman people, **was besieged and**, in the eighth month, **captured**") ~ ***Carthago****, in circuitum XXIII [passus] patens, magno labore* ***obsessa et*** *per partes* ***capta est****; primum a Mancino legato, deinde a Scipione cos., cui extra sortem Africa provincia data est* ("**Carthage**, covering 23,000 thousand [feet] in circumference, **was besieged** with great labor **and captured** piece by piece; first by the legate Mancinus, then by the consul Scipio, to whom Africa was given as his province outside the lot").

[7] For the relationship between Velleius Paterculus and Sallust, see Woodman (1969).

the inherent flexibility of the historiographical tradition, as well as to its persistent emphasis on the unbreakable bond between Carthage and Rome.

This is the intellectual background for Silius' treatment of the *metus hostilis* theme in the *Punica*.[8] In making the Second Punic War his subject, Silius agrees with Sallust in recognizing an essential link between the fates of Carthage and Rome. However, whereas the historiographer identifies 146 BC as the περιπέτεια, the poet reassigns this honor to the battle of Cannae in 216 BC. In this paper, I will trace the development of Silius' presentation of the *metus hostilis* across a series of three passages. In the first passage (3.557–629), Jupiter connects the era of the Second Punic War with that of the Flavians in his conversation with Venus on Mt. Olympus. Then, in the second (7.409–493), Proteus connects the fall of Troy with that of Carthage in his conversation with the Nereids in his grotto near Capri. Finally, in the third (9.340–353), Silius explicitly identifies Cannae as the 'turning point' for both Carthage and Rome. By the end of the paper, we will see how Silius, like Sallust, links the removal of the *metus hostilis* with the transition from *bellum externum* to *bellum civile* and, ultimately, the fall of Rome.

Punica *3.557–629: From the Second Punic War to the Flavians*

In *Punica* 3.557–629, Silius cements the connection between the fall of Saguntum and the fall of Rome through the divine conversation between Venus and Jupiter on Mt. Olympus. The passage contains the first such scene in the epic, as well as the first (and only) direct reference to the Flavians.[9] Book 3 as a whole, like Books 7 and 14, offers an internally complete narrative and, as such, plays a special structural and thematic role in the poem. After the fall of Saguntum in Books 1–2, Hannibal marches from Spain to Italy in order to destroy Rome as well. In essence,

[8] For the *metus hostilis* theme in the *Punica*, see McGuire (1985) 11–26 and 185–187, and (1997) 118 and 219; Ahl, Davis, and Pomeroy (1986) 2501–2504 and 2556; Tipping (2004) 370; and Jacobs (2009) 135–146. Laudizi (1989) 158 explicitly claims that Silius does not concern himself with the *metus hostilis* theme in the *Punica*, but this claim is patently ridiculous.

[9] There is likely an additional, indirect, reference to Domitian later in 14.684–688, but the interpretation of these lines remains uncertain: see McDermott and Orentzel (1977) 30–31; Fincher (1979) 122–123; McGuire (1985) 181–185 and (1997) 81–82; Laudizi (1989) 47–51; and Effe (2004) 95–96, as well as the helpful commentary in Roosjen (1996) 305–311 on 14.679–688.

this progression within Book 3 from Spain to Italy reflects the analogous progression from the sack of Saguntum to the sack of Rome across the epic as a whole. In a clever intertextual gesture which further connects the falls of these two cities with the fall of Troy, Silius begins *Punica* 3 with the same word with which Virgil begins *Aeneid* 3: *Postquam* (3.1 ~ *Aen.* 3.1).[10] The poet sets the stage for the divine conversation on Mt. Olympus in the closing verses of his description of Hannibal's ascent of the Alps (3.554–556). With the Carthaginian resting atop the range, Silius transfers the scene to heaven, where Venus anxiously asks of her father, Jupiter, what will happen next (3.557–629).

The conversation itself divides into three parts: first, Venus speaks (3.557–569); then, in the first half of his reply, Jupiter concerns himself with the era of the Second Punic War and of Rome's great heroes, including Paullus, Fabius, Marcellus, and Scipio (3.570–593); and, finally, in the second half of his reply, Jupiter concerns himself with the era of the Flavians—Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian (3.594–629). With near unanimity, critics have read this dialogue as an "encomium" of the Flavians (especially 3.594–629, the second half of Jupiter's reply).[11] Until recently, only McGuire had (correctly) perceived the ambiguous nature of the passage (again, especially 3.594–629).[12] Elsewhere, I have sought to build on McGuire's argument through a sustained intratextual and intertextual reading of the dialogue in light of the divine conversations in *Aeneid* 1.223–304 and 10.1–62.[13] Here, however, I will concentrate on another important aspect of the passage: Silius' use of the *metus hostilis* theme in order to connect the era of the Second Punic War with that of the Flavians (and, thus, *bellum externum* with *bellum civile*).

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[10] See von Albrecht (1964) 181–182, and (1999) 237 n. 2 and 294, and Küppers (1986) 177 n. 680 and 189: while they both note the echo of *Postquam* from *Aeneid* 3.1 in *Punica* 3.1, neither of them considers the wider ramifications of this intertextual resonance for *Punica* 3 in detail.

[11] See Kißel (1979) 38–46, 92, 93, and 159–160; Vessey (1982) 333–334; Czypicka (1987); and Marks (2005) 211–217, as well as, for the "praise" of Domitian in 3.607–629 in particular, McDermott and Orentzel (1977) 27–30; Laudizi (1989) 35–46; and Giroldini (2005) 170–180. Schubert (1984) 45–70 offers a full and balanced study of the passage in its entirety.

[12] See McGuire (1985) 175–181. In a paper on "heroes and antiheroes in Silius Italicus's Roman history" (does this mean his epic as a history or his conception of history?), Spentzou (2008) 143 n. 32 notes some of the unsettling features of the purported "encomium" (including the prophecy of Rome's decline and fall in 3.584–585), but, unfortunately, she evinces no awareness whatsoever either of McGuire's reading of the passage or of the ongoing debate about its interpretation.

[13] See Jacobs (2009) 158–190.

In *Punica* 3.557–569, Venus suddenly comes onto the scene.[14] Terrified at the prospect of Hannibal's imminent arrival in Italy (557 *ancipiti mentem labefacta timore*), the goddess asks Jupiter what his plans are for the Romans and whether he will allow the Carthaginians to drive the Romans out of their own city and into exile yet again. In particular, Venus connects the fate of Rome with that of Saguntum, and the fates of both of these cities, in turn, with that of Troy. First, she describes Hannibal conquering the Alps as he prepares to conquer Rome, in the same way as he had earlier conquered Saguntum—all of which subjects Rome to the same paralyzing fear which grips the goddess as well (564): *casus metuit iam Roma Sagunti* ("Rome now fears the fate of Saguntum"; cf. 557 *timore*). The juxtaposition of these two cities at the end of the verse (*Roma Sagunti*) appears only here in the entire epic and powerfully emphasizes how the fall of the one foreshadows and tropes the fall of the other. Then Venus describes this imminent fall of Rome, like that of Saguntum, as a replay of the fall of Troy (569): *anne iterum capta repetentur Pergama Roma?* ("Or will Pergamum be repeated with another fall of Rome?"; cf. *Pergama Roma* ~ *Roma Sagunti*). This verse is the most important line in the entire poem, and it asks the question which informs every action in the epic as it progresses from Saguntum to Rome. Here Venus draws an analogy between the two falls of Troy (cf. 1.43 *bis numina capta*)—first to Hercules and then to the Greeks—and the two falls of Rome—first to the Gauls in 390 BC (cf. 4.45–48, 4.150–153, and 6.555–556) and soon, perhaps, to Hannibal (cf. 2.33–35, 12.583–586, and 17.187–191).

In *Punica* 3.570–593, the first half of his reply to Venus, Jupiter responds to her urgent inquiry with reassurances about the preservation of Rome and, especially, of the Capitol.[15] In a rhetorical gesture common throughout the epic, the king of the gods demarcates the first half of his reply, on the Second Punic War, from the second, on the Flavians, through the marked use of the vocative *Cytherea* at the beginning and the end of the section (572 ~ 593).[16] In his opening words to his daughter, Jupiter addresses her concerns by exhorting her not to despair (571): *pelle*

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[14] For these lines, see Kißel (1979) 39–42; Schubert (1984) 48–55; and Czypicka (1987) 87–88.

[15] For these lines, see Kißel (1979) 42–46; Schubert (1984) 55–63; and Czypicka (1987) 88–90. See also Fincher (1979) 50–52 for a brief but perceptive reading of the passage.

[16] Among other examples, Silius uses verse-final *Elissae* in order to mark the beginning and the end of his ecphrasis of the shrine to Dido in Carthage where Hannibal swears his oath (1.81 ~ 1.98), and, similarly, verse-final *Zacynthos* in order to mark the beginning and the end of his ecphrasis of the origins of Saguntum (1.275 ~ 1.290).

metus ("Banish your fears"; cf. 557 *timore* and 564 *metuit*). The god then continues with a Sallustian disquisition on how the Romans have fallen away from their ancient *virtus* and sunk into the mire of *luxuria*, and on how they have experienced this lapse into moral turpitude concomitantly with the rise of the city to hegemony (575–583, cf. the plethora of abstract nouns and esp. 581 *virtus … senescit* ~ Sall. *Cat.* 12.1 *hebescere virtus*). In the lines which follow, Jupiter applies this model of rise and fall to the Second Punic War. On the one hand, he concedes to Venus that, paradoxically, it is Rome's victory in *bellum externum* which will put the city on the path to defeat in *bellum civile* (584–585): *iamque tibi veniet tempus, quo maxima rerum | nobilior sit Roma malis* ("And there will soon come a time for you, when Rome, the greatest city in the world, | will be more celebrated because of her defeats [i.e. than because of her victories]"). On the other hand, Jupiter also insists that the city's descent from *virtus* into *luxuria* will not erase the memory of Rome's great heroes from the war—Paullus, Fabius, Marcellus, and, greatest of all, Scipio. In short, the Second Punic War (more specifically, the battle of Cannae, as we will see) marks the rise and the fall of both Carthage and Rome, as well as, for Rome in particular, the beginning of the transition from *bellum externum* to *bellum civile* and, at the same time, from Republic to Empire.

In *Punica* 3.594–629, the second half of his reply to Venus, Jupiter links the era of the Second Punic War with that of the Flavians, as if the defeat in the civil war of AD 69 and the resulting chaos were the only logical consequence of the victory over Carthage.[17] Following the brief prophecies about Vespasian (594–602) and Titus (603–606), the king of the gods introduces his lengthy prophecy about Domitian (607–629) in dramatic style, hailing him as "Germanicus" (607 *Germanice*) and, more expansively, as "dreaded by the golden-haired Batavi while still a boy" (608 *iam puer auricomo praeformidate Batavo*). In the lines which follow, however, Silius undercuts any ostensible "praise" for Domitian with an unsettling allusion to his narrow escape from the burning of the Capitol during the fighting in Rome in AD 69, when, ironically enough, the Romans themselves realize Hannibal's goal of razing the citadel (609–610): *nec te terruerint Tarpei culminis ignes; | sacrilegas inter flammas servabere terris* ("Nor will the fires of the Tarpeian Rock have frightened you; | you will be saved amid the sacrilegious flames for the lands of the Earth"). Like Hannibal, Domitian inflicts great terror, in *bella externa* (cf. 608

[17] For these lines, see Kißel (1979) 42–46 and 159–160; Schubert (1984) 63–69; and Czypicka (1987) 90–92.

praeformidate) and in *bella civilia* (cf. 609 *terruerint*). Moreover, this allusion casts a dark pall over the subsequent references to Domitian's later military exploits, including his victories over the Dacians and the Sarmatians (611–617), as well as over the wider celebration of his achievements in poetry (618–621) and architecture—that is, his rebuilding of the razed Capitol (622–624). Most of all, however, the allusion to Domitian atop the burning Capitol in AD 69 offers a challenging counterpoint to Jupiter's concluding vision of his apotheosis (625–629); furthermore, if Silius composed this passage after the emperor's death in 96 (which is at least possible), then it would be tempting to read this imagery as an ironic reversal of Domitian's actual fate—not divinization, but *damnatio memoriae*. In short, where Hannibal fails, Domitian (and, before him, as we will see, Scipio) succeeds, in crossing the boundary of the city walls, scaling the Capitol, and, ultimately, bringing about the fall of Rome.

Punica *7.409–493: From the Fall of Troy to the Fall of Carthage*

In *Punica* 7.409–493, Silius likewise cements the connection between the fall of Troy and the fall of Carthage through another divine conversation, that between Proteus and the Nereids in his grotto near Capri. The passage serves as a structural and thematic complement to 3.557–629, transforming the falls of both Carthage and Rome into replays of the falls of both Saguntum and Troy. Book 7 as a whole, like Book 3, offers an interlude between two larger narrative blocks: in the case of Book 3, between the siege of Saguntum in Books 1–2 and the battles of the Ticinus River, the Trebia River, and Lake Trasimene in Books 4–6; in the case of Book 7, between Books 4–6 and the battle of Cannae in Books 8–10. In Book 7 in particular, Silius recounts the struggle between Hannibal and the Roman general Q. Fabius Maximus, the (in)famous Cunctator. After enjoying some initial success in his efforts at slowing down the Carthaginian general, Fabius is called back to Rome in order to fulfill a religious obligation, leaving his army in the hands of his *magister equitum*, M. Minucius Rufus (7.1–408). Between this section and that on Fabius' return to the field, where he saves the rash Minucius from defeat at the hands of Hannibal (7.494–750), Silius inserts the dialogue between Proteus and the Nereids. The conversation itself again divides into three parts: first, the Nereids arrive at the grotto, Proteus greets them, and Cymodoce speaks (7.409–434); then, in the first half of his reply, Proteus concerns himself with the events leading to the fall of

Troy (7.435–478); and, finally, in the second half of his reply, Proteus concerns himself with the events leading to the fall of Carthage (7.479–493). While the dialogue has attracted some attention, critics, almost without exception, have overlooked its importance for an understanding of Silius' conception of the role of the *metus hostilis* theme in the falls of Carthage and Rome.[18]

In *Punica* 7.409–434, a Carthaginian fleet suddenly arrives at the shores of Caieta, causing a great commotion among the Nereids who live in the area. While Livy does not refer to this incident in his narrative of the war, Polybius (3.96.8–10) and, later in the tradition, Zonaras (8.26.13) do describe the activities of a Carthaginian fleet in the waters off the Italian coast—even they, however, do not refer to an arrival at Caieta (or sea nymphs, of course).[19] Whatever his source and inspiration for the episode, Silius uses it as the motivation and the frame for the following dialogue between Proteus and the Nereids. Ironically (and, perhaps, intentionally), the profound significance of the historiographical themes discussed stands in stark contrast with the dubious historicity of the events which inspire the conversation in the first place. Indeed, stricken with fear at the sight of the Carthaginian flotilla, the Nereids immediately hasten *en masse* to the abode of the *vates* (7.421) Proteus at nearby Capri. True to his 'protean' nature, the 'Old Man of the Sea', even though he knows full well the reasons for their arrival and their evident fear (cf. 422 *sat gnarus enim rerumque metusque*), subjects the sea nymphs to several of his various transformations before finally asking them why they have come and why they wish to inquire about the future. At this point, the conversation here in Book 7 begins to closely mirror that in Book 3, with Cymodoce, the eldest of the Nereids, playing the role of Venus, and Proteus, that of Jupiter. Thus Cymodoce, speaking on behalf of her fellow sea nymphs, responds to Proteus' sly interrogations with a series of questions, just as Venus had initiated her conversation with Jupiter with a similarly intense series of questions (7.428–434 ~ 3.557–569). In particular, Cymodoce asks Proteus what the arrival of the Carthaginian fleet portends, if the gods will be forced to emigrate from Italy to Africa, if the Carthaginian fleet will take control of the region, and if the Nereids

[18] See Stärk (1993) (on the grotto itself) and Perutelli (1997) (against an intertextual relationship between *Pun.* 7.409–493 and the story of Orpheus and Eurydice in Virg. *G.* 4.415–558): neither of them, however, considers the importance of the *metus hostilis* theme. See also van Veen (1884) 48–49; Beaty (1960) 84–85 and 173; Fincher (1979) 79; and Kißel (1979) 46 n. 135.

[19] See van Veen (1884) 48; Nicol (1936) 38–39; and Nesselrath (1986) 214–215.

will be forced to live in exile at the ends of the Earth, just as Venus had asked Jupiter what the arrival of Hannibal in Italy portended, if she and her Aeneadae would be driven out of Italy, if Hannibal would sack Rome as he had sacked Saguntum, and if the Romans would be forced to live in exile after another repetition of the fall of Troy. In short, Cymodoce reiterates Venus' essential question (3.569): *anne iterum capta repetentur Pergama Roma?*[20]

In *Punica* 7.435–478, the first half of his reply to the Nereids, Proteus, taking his cue from the intimate link between Troy and Rome, connects the Judgment of Paris with the founding of Rome. From the outset, however, Silius identifies Proteus as an *ambiguus vates* (436), and, as we will see, this element of deception and intentional ambiguity creates serious problems for any attempt at elucidating the passage. First, Proteus recounts the Judgment of Paris, leading to the death of Paris and the fall of Troy (437–473, with verse-final *Troia*, 473 ~ 3.564 *Roma Sagunti* and 3.569 *Pergama Roma*).[21] Then, in a clever summary of the *Aeneid*, the god connects that destruction with the founding of Rome (474–475): *tum pius Aeneas terris iactatus et undis | Dardanios Itala posuit tellure penates* ("Then pious Aeneas, tossed about on land and at sea, | established his Dardanian penates in the Italian land"). Finally, like Jupiter in the first half of his reply to Venus (3.570–593), Proteus reassures Cymodoce about the preservation of Roman hegemony (476–478): *hic regna et nullae regnis per saecula metae* ("Here is where your kingdom will be, and there will be no limits for your kingdom through the centuries"). The emphasis on the noun *regnum* in this verse not only strongly links 7.435–478 with 3.570–593 (cf. 583 *regna*; 588 *regnum*; and 593 *regnabitur*), but also points to the problem inherent in both passages. By referring to Rome as a *regnum*, Jupiter and Proteus prophesy the continued supremacy of the city while also positing a link between the Second

[20] The Nereid subtly reinforces the connections between herself and Venus, and, perhaps more importantly, between Rome and Troy, by referring to Rome as the *Rhoeteia regna* in 7.431, cf. 2.51–52 *Rhoeteius ... populus* (of Rome); 9.621 *Rhoeteia pubes* (of Rome); 14.487 *ductor Rhoeteius* (of Marcellus); 17.196 *Rhoeteia lancea* (of Rome); and 17.486 *ductor Rhoeteius* (of Scipio Africanus), as well as 1.115 *Rhoeteaque fata* (of Troy); 8.618 *Rhoeteo litore* (of Troy, in a simile comparing the battle of Cannae with the battle around the walls of Troy); and 9.72 *nomine Rhoeteo* (of Troy). The use of *ductor Rhoeteius*, in the same metrical *sedes*, to describe first Marcellus (14.487) and then Scipio Africanus (17.486) is especially noteworthy, as is the consistent distinction between the variants *Rhoeteius* (~ Roman) and *Rhoeteus* (~ Trojan).

[21] See Bruère (1958) 495–499 (on the *color Ovidianus* in the passage) and Ripoll (2000a) 99–103 (on the depiction of Paris and the Stoic allegory in the passage).

Punic War and the city's transition from *bellum externum* to *bellum civile* and, at the same time, from Republic to Empire (a return to *regnum*, i.e. the Monarchy).

In *Punica* 7.479–493, the second half of his reply to the Nereids, Proteus links the era of the fall of Troy with that of the fall of Carthage, as if the battle of Cannae in 216 BC and the later fall of Carthage in 146 were the only logical consequence of the fall of Troy and the later founding of Rome. In doing so, the god offers a complementary argument to that offered by Jupiter in the second half of his reply to Venus (3.594–629). Together, these two arguments connect the falls of both Carthage and Rome with the earlier falls of both Saguntum and Troy: more specifically, Silius uses this analysis in order to shift the 'turning point' from 146 BC (the end of the Third Punic War) back to 216 (the middle of the Second). First, Proteus urges the sea nymphs not to tempt fate (cf. 479 *immobile filum*), but, instead, to flee at the approach of the Carthaginian fleet (479–480). Then the god provides a summary of the action of the second half of the current conflict, including the battles of Cannae, the Metaurus River, and Zama (481–491). Finally, in a telling glimpse beyond the literary and historical boundaries of the *Punica*, Proteus refers to Scipio Aemilianus and the fall of Carthage at the end of the Third Punic War (492–493).[22] The emphasis on scaling the Capitol in triumph in 7.492–493 not only strongly links 7.479–493 with 3.594–629 (cf. 7.493 *in Capitolia* ~ 3.609 *Tarpei culminis* and 3.623 *aurea Tarpeia* … *Capitolia rupe*), but also, again, points to the problem inherent in both passages, namely, the problematic nature of the triumph. Most of all, however, through the connection between the battle of Cannae and the fall of Carthage, Silius brings us directly back to Sallust and the *metus hostilis* theme.

Punica *9.340–353: The Battle of Cannae as the περιπέτεια or 'turning point'*

In the divine conversations between Jupiter and Venus in Book 3, and between Proteus and the Nereids in Book 7, Silius establishes the basic framework for his subsequent reflections on the significance of the Second Punic War—in particular, the battles of Cannae and Zama—for the falls of both Carthage and Rome. In Books 8–10, the poet balances his

[22] Delz (1987) 517 s.v. "Scipio 7 (*Africanus minor*)" inexplicably overlooks this reference to P. Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus Minor in his *index nominum*: he does,

account of the battles of the Ticinus, the Trebia, and Lake Trasimene in Books 4–6 with an extensive account of the battle of Cannae.[23] This climactic battle marks Hannibal's greatest victory, as well as one of the four key moments in the entire war, along with the fall of Saguntum (Books 1–2), Hannibal's march on Rome (Book 12), and the battle of Zama (Book 17).[24] In his narrative of the war, Silius departs from his chief historiographical source and inspiration, Livy, by heavily distorting the chronological distribution of his material. Whereas Livy covers the events of the Second Punic War at a generally even pace, with approximately the same amount of narrative space devoted to each year of the conflict, Silius drastically expands his narrative of the war between Saguntum and Cannae, and, correspondingly, drastically compresses his narrative of the war between Cannae and Zama. As a result, Books 1–10 cover the events of 218–216 BC, and Books 11–17, those of 216–201. Through this remarkable distortion, Silius not only "recenters" the narrative focus from the march on Rome in 211 BC—the actual chronological middle of the war—to the battle of Cannae in 216, but also thereby shifts the thematic focus from the consequences of Hannibal's failed march on the city to the consequences of the Carthaginian's momentous victory in the plains of Apulia.[25] (As we will see, this also sets up the fundamental connection between the importance of Cannae for the fall of Carthage and the importance of Zama for the fall of Rome.) As a result of this process of expansion and compression, Silius transforms the battle of Cannae into the περιπέτεια or 'turning point' not only of the Second Punic War, but also of the entirety of Roman history (and, again, historiography).

Towards the beginning of his narrative of the actual battle in 9.278–10.325, Silius marks Cannae as this 'turning point' in a fourteen-line invocation of the Muses (9.340–353; cf. 340 *deae*).[26] Elsewhere in the

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however, include the similarly indirect reference to this Scipio made by Jupiter later in 17.374–375 during his final conversation with Juno immediately before the beginning of the climactic battle of Zama.

[23] For analysis of this narrative as a whole, see Niemann (1975) 159–247 and Fincher (1979) 83–97.

[24] For the many connections between Saguntum and Cannae, see Dominik (2006): there are similar connections between Cannae and Zama (as well as between the fall of Saguntum and the march on Rome), but critics have not, thus far, paid much attention to them: see Jacobs (2009) 191–299.

[25] For a fuller discussion of this issue and its attendant difficulties, see Jacobs (2009) 70–118.

[26] See Beaty (1960) 59–60; von Albrecht (1964) 153; Niemann (1975) 192–194; and Burck (1979) 295–299, esp. 298–299, as well as the bibliography in n. 30.

poem, Silius speaks *in propria persona* (especially in invocations of the Muses) in 1.1–20, 2.696–707, 10.657–658, 14.684–688, and 17.651–654.[27] In particular, the material in 9.340–353 recalls that in another fourteen-line invocation of the Muses (cf. 420 *o Musae*) in 5.420–433, during Silius' narrative of the battle of Lake Trasimene (cf. esp. 9.340–345 ~ 5.420–426). Perhaps even more importantly, the material in 9.340–353 (esp. 346–353) recalls that in Jupiter's Sallustian disquisition on the decline and fall of Rome during his conversation with Venus (9.346–353):

> verum utinam posthac animo, Romane, secunda,
> quanto tunc adversa, feras! sitque hactenus, oro,
> nec libeat temptare deis, an Troia proles
> par bellum tolerare queat. tuque anxia fati
> pone, precor, lacrimas et adora vulnera laudes
> perpetuas paritura tibi. nam tempore, Roma,
> nullo maior eris. mox sic labere secundis,
> ut sola cladum tuearis nomina fama.

> Would that you, O Roman, might bear success in time to come
> with as great a spirit as you then bore adversity! And, I pray, let this be enough,
> and let it not please the gods to test whether Trojan offspring
> can endure another great war. And you, worried about your fate,
> give up your tears, I beg you, and bless the wounds
> which will bring you everlasting praise. Indeed, O Rome
> at no other time will you be greater. Soon you will fall because of your success,
> such that you will preserve the memory of your defeats by their fame alone.

In these lines, Silius paradoxically identifies the impending *clades* at Cannae as *both* Rome's greatest defeat *and* the city's greatest victory. The poet confirms the link between this passage and that in Book 3 through a powerful intratextual echo, as Silius himself marks Cannae as the "time" when Rome begins the transition from *bellum externum* to *bellum civile* and, at the same time, from Republic to Empire (9.351–352): *nam* ***tempore****, Roma,* | ***nullo*** *maior eris* ("Indeed, O Rome, | **at no other time** will you be greater") ~ 3.584–585 *iamque tibi* ***veniet tempus****,* ***quo*** *maxima rerum* | *nobilior sit Roma malis* ("And **there will soon come a time** for you, **when** Rome, the greatest city in the world, | will be more celebrated because of her defeats"). Silius elaborates on this

[27] In general, see Effe (2004) 89–97: much more remains to be done on this subject, however.

observation by outlining how the battle of Cannae marks Rome's shift *both* from defeat to victory *and* from victory to defeat. The poet explains how victory in the engagement will put Carthage on the path to defeat and, accordingly, Rome on the path to victory; at the same time, however, the poet also explains how victory in a future engagement (i.e. Zama) will put Rome on a similar path to defeat. In short, both Carthage and Rome will eventually defeat themselves *because* of their respective victories at Cannae and Zama. In order to develop this argument, Silius draws on Sallust's opposition between *res secundae* and *res advorsae* (cf. Sall. *Cat.* 11.8, *Jug.* 41.3–4, and *Hist.* 1.11) in both the opening and the closing verses of the passage (346–347): *verum utinam posthac animo, Romane,* ***secunda***, | *quanto tunc* ***adversa***, *feras!* ("Would that you, O Roman, might bear **success** in time to come | with as great a spirit as you then bore **adversity**!") ~ 352–353 *mox sic labere* ***secundis***, | *ut sola cladum tuearis nomina fama* ("Soon you will fall **because of your success**, | such that you will preserve the memory of your defeats by their fame alone"). In short, Cannae marks the beginning of the transition from *res advorsae* to *res secundae*, that is, the beginning of the removal of the *metus hostilis* and, thus, the fall of Rome.[28]

Later, at the very end of his lengthy account of the battle of Cannae, Silius restates this fundamental paradox in even bolder terms (10.657–658): *haec tum Roma fuit. post te cui vertere mores* | *si stabat fatis, potius, Carthago, maneres* ("This is what Rome was then. If it was fated that, after your fall, O Carthage, | Rome would change her ways, would that you were still standing").[29] In this lapidary couplet, a fitting epitaph for the narrative in Books 8–10, Silius resumes his meditation on the significance of Cannae as a transitional moment in Roman history and historiography. Once again, as earlier in 9.340–353, the poet draws a sharp contrast between the past (the time before Cannae) and the present (the time after Cannae): 10.657 *tum* ~ *post*; cf. 9.346–347 *posthac* ~ *tunc*, as well as 9.352 *mox*.[30] Beyond this intratextual gesture, Silius also

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[28] While the opposition between *res secundae* and *res advorsae* is certainly as much Livian as it is Sallustian, I have chosen to emphasize the Sallustian aspect here, because Silius agrees rather more with Sallust than with Livy in his general approach to the *metus hostilis* theme.

[29] See Fincher (1979) 96–97; McGuire (1985) 8–10 and (1997) 56–57; and Tipping (2007), as well as the bibliography in n. 30.

[30] Scholars have long noted the relationship between 9.340–353 and 10.657–658: see Beaty (1960) 170–171; Fowler (1997) 20–24 = (2000) 123–127; Effe (2004) 94–95; Tipping (2004) 363–364 and 369–370, and (2007) 230–231; and Jacobs (2009) 112–114.

integrates a wide range of intertextual resonances into these closing verses, including a stunning echo of Aeneas' lament over the Trojans' unwise decision to bring the Trojan Horse within their walls. If the Trojans had realized that the Greeks were hiding inside, then they would never have brought it into the city, "and now Troy would still be standing, and you, lofty citadel of Priam, would still remain" (Virg. *Aen.* 2.56 *Troiaque nunc staret, Priamique arx alta maneres*; cf. esp. *staret* ~ *Pun.* 10.658 *stabat*, and verse-final *maneres* in both).[31] Fittingly, Silius again confirms the pivotal nature of Cannae and the consequent division of the poem into Books 1–10 and 11–17 in the opening words of the following book (11.1): *Nunc age* ("Now, then"). With that, the shift from "then" to "now" is complete, as Rome, like Carthage, begins the march to victory/defeat.

Conclusion: Metus Hostilis *and the Fall of Rome in the* Punica

In *Punica* 1–10, Silius recounts the events of the Second Punic War between the fall of Saguntum and the battle of Cannae. As we have seen, the poet uses his narrative in this first half of the epic as a platform not only for crafting his own version of events, but also for conducting a broader inquiry into the significance of the war for both Carthage and Rome (e.g. 3.557–629 and 7.409–493). This narrative reaches its climax at Cannae, the pivotal moment at which Silius marks the beginning of the transition from Carthage to Rome, from *bellum externum* to *bellum civile*, and, most of all, from Republic to Empire (cf. 9.340–353 and 10.657–658). In *Punica* 11–17, Silius continues this literary and historical/historiographical investigation with a comparable account of the rise, decline, and fall of Rome between Cannae and Zama. Here too, the poet uses his narrative in this second half of the epic as a platform for the manipulation of various spatial and temporal boundaries in order to cast his work not just as an account of the Second Punic War, but even as an account of the Second Punic War as an account of the entire history of Rome, from the fall of Troy until the "fall" of Rome during the chaos of

[31] On a related note, Tipping (2007) 227 n. 29 suggests a potential pun in *mores* ~ *mora* in *Pun.* 10.657–658: for other potential word play, here and elsewhere in the epic, in what I have called the "ten phonologically significant theme-words" for the *Punica* (*arma*, *Maro*, *amor*/*Amor*, *Mars*, *Roma*, *murus*, *Maurus*, *mores*, *mora*, and *mors*), see Jacobs (2009) 155–157 and 210–212.

AD 69. This narrative, accordingly, reaches its climax at Zama, the pivotal moment at which Silius marks the end of the transition from Carthage to Rome, from *bellum externum* to *bellum civile*, and from Republic to Empire. Put simply, it is Hannibal's climactic victory at Cannae which ensures the fall of Carthage, and it is Scipio's climactic victory at Zama which will ensure the fall of Rome.

In *Punica* 17.625–654, after his victory at Zama, Scipio returns to Rome, where, like his counterpart Hannibal earlier at Capua (11.1–482), he celebrates his victory with a triumph.[32] By concluding his narrative of the war with this event, Silius follows Livy (cf. 30.45) in using a "closural device" which marks the triumph as both the end of the Second Punic War and, at the same time, the beginning of Rome's mission to conquer the *orbis terrarum*. Beyond the affinity with Livy, Silius' deft manipulation of closural boundaries here also recalls a comparable effect in the final paragraph of Sallust's *Jugurtha*, which balances a narrative of the *clades* at the battle of Arausio during the war with the Cimbri (114.1–2) with a narrative of Marius' triumph for his victory over Jugurtha (114.3–4), both in 105 BC. Like Sallust, Silius ends with a triumph which emphasizes the tension between the present celebration and the salutary threat of future violence (cf. esp. the reference to Hannibal in 17.643–644). The operation of this closural device is, however, far more complex in the *Punica* than it is in the *Jugurtha*. When Scipio returns home after his victory in the Spanish campaign, Hannibal remains to be conquered, and so Rome can safely rejoice at Scipio's "triumph," since the *metus Punicus* remains in effect (16.592–599; cf. 600–700). This situation precisely corresponds to that in the city at the end of the *Jugurtha*: Rome can safely rejoice at Marius' triumph, too, since the *metus Gallicus* remains in effect. When Scipio returns home the second time, however, after his victory in the African campaign, the circumstances are completely different (17.625–654). Earlier, Hannibal had mistakenly believed that his victory at Cannae and, especially, Varro's flight from the field, had brought him a final victory over Rome. Now Scipio similarly mistakes his victory at Zama and Hannibal's flight from the field as proof of his final victory over Carthage. Consequently, like Hannibal at Capua, Scipio celebrates an unmerited and premature triumph at Rome. In a sense, Silius offers a double clo-

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[32] See Fincher (1979) 148; Kißel (1979) 149; Burck (1980) 170–173; McGuire (1985) 10–11, 148–174, and 189, and (1997) 95–103, esp. 97 and 98–102; Laudizi (1989) 138–140; Marks (2005) 83, 113–114, 168–169, and 201–206; Tipping (2007) 231–241; and Jacobs (2009) 285–299.

sural device which first acknowledges and then outdoes the ending of the *Jugurtha*.

Nevertheless, apart from these differences, Silius and Sallust both arrive at the same basic conclusion. Ultimately, victory in *bellum externum* predicates suicidal defeat in *bellum civile*. As Rome defeats all of her foreign enemies, she also leaves only herself to defeat; at the same time, as the city experiences the rise to hegemony in the Mediterranean, she also experiences a decline in morals: *res advorsae* give way to *res secundae*, and *virtus* succumbs to *luxuria*. Indeed, in his narrative of Scipio's entrance into Rome in 17.625–654, Silius even goes so far as to depict the *triumphator* as the very embodiment of *luxuria*—as if, in the act of crossing the boundary of the city walls and scaling the Capitol, he were literally bringing in vice and, thus, bringing about the fall of Rome. Earlier, in 15.1–128, a young Scipio had been faced with the Choice of Hercules, that between Virtus and Voluptas. Towards the beginning of the passage, Silius describes Voluptas as she strides forth dressed in gold and purple (15.24–25): *veste refulgens*, | ***ostrum*** *qua fulvo Tyrium suffuderat* ***auro*** ("shining in her vestments, | which were suffused with Tyrian **purple** and tawny **gold**"). At the end of the passage, after Scipio chooses Virtus, Voluptas storms off, but not until after she issues the grave threat, "My time will come, it will come, | when … Rome" will choose not Virtus, but herself (15.125–126 *venient, venient mea tempora quondam*, | *cum* … *Roma* ~ 3.584–585, both with a potential pun in *venio* ~ Venus). It is, in fact, Scipio who fulfills this threat when he enters Rome dressed, like Voluptas, in gold and purple (17.645): *ipse adstans curru atque* ***auro*** *decoratus et* ***ostro*** ("He himself standing in his chariot and adorned with **gold** and **purple**"). The nouns *ostrum* and *aurum* appear in the same verse only in these two passages in the entire epic: when Scipio enters Rome, he does so as Voluptas, and the city is now doomed to fall.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RHOXOLANI BLUES (TACITUS, *HISTORIES* 1.79): VIRGIL'S SCYTHIAN ETHNOGRAPHY REVISITED*

Rhiannon Ash

In many modern readers, the notion of warfare and descriptions of battles understandably stir ambivalent or negative feelings: people feel despair at the loss of human life (even in a 'just' war) and horror at the dehumanising effects of warfare on individuals.[1] The idea that ancient audiences could actually read (or view) descriptions of battles for enjoyment can therefore seem odd and alien.[2] Some years ago, Stephen Harrison in his commentary on Virgil *Aeneid* 10 speculated that, for precisely this reason, scholars and readers had for a long time been less willing to turn their attention to the second half of the *Aeneid*, because of the dominant role of warfare in the narrative.[3] Yet in ancient historiography the enjoyment to be gained from reading battle narratives (particularly

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1 Ancient authors were sensitive to the concept of the *bellum iustum* (e.g. Cic. *Rep.* 3.35 *illa iniusta bella sunt, quae sine causa suscepta*) and the concept was of course deployed for rhetorical purposes (e.g. Cic. *Cat.* 2.1, *Phil.* 8.12, 11.38, 13.35, *Inv.* 2.70, *Off.* 1.36, *Fam.* 6.6.6, *Att.* 7.14.3, 9.19.1), including praise (Suet. *Aug.* 21.2) and self-praise (*RG* 26). See Albert (1980) for the development of the concept between the First Punic War and the end of the Republic, with Harris (1979) 166–175. Mantovani (1990) analyses the concept of the 'just war' in the imperial period. As Mattern (1999) 184 observes, "The idea that wars of conquest ought not to be simply plundering missions, land grabs, or occasions of self-aggrandizement is very strongly attested, although all these things were good and legitimate results of a 'just' war—of a war, that is, provoked by the enemy." Mattern-Parkes (2003) discusses one instance of an unjust war, Crassus' war against the Parthians, which led to his defeat at Carrhae.

2 Such audience enjoyment may seem particularly odd in a Roman context (compared with the often idealised images encountered in e.g. archaic Greece). Hölscher (2003) 3 observes: "Realistic battle-scenes … seem to be a domain of Roman art." He then goes on to make some interesting remarks about the reception of such scenes by viewers of works of art, depending on their own personal experience of battle (or lack of it).

3 Harrison (1991) xxxi–xxxiii (esp. xxxi: "Six books of battle-description, however skilfully varied and enriched with Homeric reminiscence, were likely to prove tedious even to an appreciative Roman readership unless leavened in some way").

those involving foreign conquest) is often highlighted by authors, as in a famous passage of Tacitus (*Ann.* 4.33.3):

> nam situs gentium, varietates proeliorum, clari ducum exitus retinent ac redintegrant legentium animum ...[4]
>
> For it is the localities of peoples, the ups and downs of battles, and the famous deaths of generals which grip and refresh readers' minds ...

We can also think here of the emphasis so often placed in historiographical prologues on battles as an enticing "hook" for potential readers,[5] while epic too evolves similar siren-like strategies at the opening of the narrative, frequently in the very first word or line.[6] Although the notion of battle descriptions potentially having a reinvigorating impact on ancient readers may initially seem perplexing to us, there are ways in which it makes sense. For example, the fact that the reader of a battle description is usually an 'absent presence', in the sense of being an onlooker from a safe distance, can enhance enjoyment, especially if the scene involves a past disaster narrowly averted or stirs a sense of national pride.[7] Indeed, Cicero in his letter to Lucceius (*ad Fam.* 5.12.5) identifies as a distinct constituency of readers those non-participants who went through no personal distress themselves, but who look upon the misfortunes of other people and experience an enjoyable sense of pity. That sense of distance effectively creates an emotional buffer zone and offers scope for a kind of pleasure which was probably different from how a veteran of the actual battle might react to the same account.[8] One critic, David McNeil, who has analysed depictions of war in eighteenth-century English literature, explains the phenomenon in another way: "One may always derive an

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[4] It is an elegant and appropriate touch that the verb *redintegro* (featuring 8× in Tacitus) is often used in military contexts for renewing warfare (*OLD* 2a *redintegro*), as at Tac. *Hist.* 4.13.3, 4.28.3, 4.34.4.

[5] *bellum ... magnum et atrox variaque victoria* (Sall. *Jug.* 5.1), *ea belli gloria est populo Romano ut ...* (Liv. *Pref.* 7), *opus ... atrox proeliis* (Tac. *Hist.* 1.2.1).

[6] *arma virumque cano* (Virg. *Aen.* 1.1), *ordior arma* (Sil. 1.1), *fraternas acies* (Stat. *Theb.* 1.1).

[7] There are parallels from other eras. In an article analysing lukewarm reviews of Herman Melville's book of poetry, *Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War* (1866), Megan Williams (2003) 145 suggests that the public, conditioned by their experience of vivid photographic records of the American civil war, is "looking for 'enjoyment,' for the vicarious thrill that comes from the illusion of participating in the action as it occurs."

[8] That said, there are instances where a battlefield is mediated for non-combatants through the presence of actual participants, as at Tac. *Hist.* 2.70, Vitellius' visit to the battlefield at Bedriacum (with Ash (2007b) 231–232, 274–275). See Pagán (2000) on such 'aftermath narratives' more generally.

aesthetic pleasure from the form even when the subject is horrible."[9] This factor may partly explain why ancient historians devoted such creativity and attention to battle-scenes in their own accounts: so often they are purple passages, standing out from the surrounding narrative and often invested with "fictive" elements, regardless of what may have actually happened on the day of battle.[10] Battle descriptions clearly mattered deeply to ancient historians and their audiences, partly, but not only, for the potential pleasure which they could provide.

The aim of this chapter is to consider more closely the kind of enjoyment which an ancient reader could derive from such scenes, and also to analyse the range of other possible reactions to a battle narrative. In order to do this, we will focus primarily on one specific example, albeit one which has far-reaching implications for the narrative in which it is set. Our case-study involves what might be called the first proper battle narrative in the opening book of Tacitus' *Histories* (or at least the first battle in which Romans are depicted as fighting foreign invaders, rather than turning their military skills on fellow citizens).[11] What Tacitus describes at *Histories* 1.79 is a short-lived and ineffectual incursion of a colourful Sarmatian tribe, the Rhoxolani, into the Roman province of Moesia, which took place in February or March 69, when Otho was still emperor.[12] It is clear that this battle features at rather a late stage in *Histories* 1;[13] but its deferral until chapter 79 arguably enhances readers'

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[9] McNeil (1990) 42.

[10] Bucher (2005) explores such fictive elements in the battle narratives of Appian's *Roman History*, emphasising (70) "his willingness to alloy his narrative gold with the base metal of a fictive literary conceit." A more positive response to such techniques in ancient historiography is, however, also possible.

[11] On battle-scenes in Tacitus in general, see Morgan (1992), Woodman (1998) 70–85, Ash (1999a) and (2007a).

[12] On the Sarmatians, see Wilkes (1983) and (2000).

[13] (***SETTING THE SCENE***) **1** Introduction to the work; **2–3** Particular themes of the *Histories*; **4–11** Detailed retrospective survey of events (June–December 68); (***ROME***) **12–20** Beginning of the narrative proper (January 1st 69). Galba's activities in Rome as *princeps*, including his adoption of a son, Piso, to succeed him; **21–26** The origins of Otho's challenge; his attempts to court the favour of the soldiers; **27–35** Galba's last day (January 15th); Piso's address to the troops and the real beginning of Otho's coup; **36–43** Otho's address to the soldiers; the escalation of military action; the murders of Galba and Piso, both decapitated; **44–50** Interlude: the burial of the dead, the senate's 'award' of imperial power to Otho, Tacitus' obituaries for the dead, and reactions to the change of emperors in Rome; (***GERMANY AND GAUL***) **51–54** Background to Vitellius' imperial challenge: disaffection in Germany and Gaul; **55–62** Vitellius' salutation as emperor by the troops in Germany (January 2nd–3rd) and his preparations for civil war; **63–70**

enjoyment of the passage, particularly after the bloodbath of citizens in the forum in Rome. Certainly, its contrast with the subject matter of the preceding narrative makes it stand out. Moreover, since the battle takes place in Moesia, which extended along the Lower Danube to the Black Sea, it is also conspicuous for being anomalous in comparison with the broad geographical pattern within the book, where Tacitus alternates regularly between events taking place in Rome and military activities in Germany and Gaul.[14] Both its position in *Histories* 1 and its subject matter seem to demand our attention. So too does the fact that Tacitus is the only one of our sources for the civil wars of 68–69 to report the battle: Plutarch, Suetonius and Cassius Dio do not even mention it in passing. Let us now look at the passage itself more closely:

> [1] conversis ad civile bellum animis externa sine cura habebantur. eo audentius Rhoxolani, Sarmatica gens, priore hieme caesis duabus cohortibus, magna spe Moesiam irruperant, ad novem milia equitum, ex ferocia et successu praedae magis quam pugnae intenta. igitur vagos et incuriosos tertia legio adiunctis auxiliis repente invasit. [2] apud Romanos omnia proelio apta: Sarmatae dispersi aut cupidine praedae graves onere sarcinarum et lubrico itinerum adempta equorum pernicitate velut vincti caedebantur. namque mirum dictu ut sit omnis Sarmatarum virtus velut extra ipsos. nihil ad pedestrem pugnam tam ignavum: ubi per turmas advenere vix ulla acies obstiterit. [3] sed tum umido die et soluto gelu neque conti neque gladii, quos praelongos utraque manu regunt, usui, lapsantibus equis et catafractarum pondere. id principibus et nobilissimo cuique tegimen, ferreis lamminis aut praeduro corio consertum, ut adversus ictus impenetrabile ita impetu hostium provolutis inhabile ad resurgendum; simul altitudine et mollitia nivis hauriebantur. [4] Romanus miles facilis lorica et missili pilo aut lanceis adsultans, ubi res posceret, levi gladio inermem Sarmatam (neque enim scuto defendi mos est) comminus fodiebat, donec pauci qui proelio superfuerant paludibus abderentur. ibi saevitia hiemis aut vulnerum absumpti. [5] postquam id Romae compertum, M. Aponius Moesiam obtinens triumphali statua, Fulvus Aurelius et Iulianus Tettius ac Numisius Lupus, legati legionum, consularibus orna-

Vitellius' generals, Caecina and Valens, march in two separate columns from Germany, through Gaul, towards the Alps; (***ROME***) **71–78** The early activities of Otho as emperor in Rome, including pardoning (some) enemies and making public benefactions; (***MOESIA***) **79** Interlude: a Sarmatian tribe, the Rhoxolani, invade the province of Moesia, but they are swiftly repulsed; (***ROME***) **80–85** A mutiny of praetorian soldiers in Rome, who believe that their emperor Otho is being threatened; **86** Omens and prodigies; **87–90** Otho acknowledges that the threat from Vitellius is real and prepares for war. He sets off for northern Italy (March 15th) with his troops.

[14] On Tacitus' representation of space in the *Histories*, see Pomeroy (2003).

mentis donantur, laeto Othone et gloriam in se trahente, tamquam et ipse felix bello et suis ducibus suisque exercitibus rem publicam auxisset.

[1] While minds were intent on civil war, foreign affairs were being neglected. As a result, the Rhoxolani, a Sarmatian tribe, after slaughtering two cohorts of auxiliaries in the previous winter, became more daring and invaded Moesia with great hopes. They had nearly 9,000 cavalry, who were more intent on plunder than fighting, thanks to their natural ferocity and previous success. Therefore, while the Rhoxolani were wandering about and off their guard, the Third Legion and its auxiliary forces suddenly attacked. [2] Amongst the Romans, everything was ready for battle, but the Sarmatians were scattered about in their desire for plunder or heavily laden with spoils, and thanks to the slippery roads, which deprived the horses of their speed, they were being slaughtered like men in chains. For it is remarkable to relate how all the courage of the Sarmatians rests on extraneous factors. Nobody is so cowardly when it comes to an infantry battle, but when they charge in squadrons of cavalry, scarcely any battleline would withstand them. [3] Yet on that occasion (a wet day when the ice had thawed), their pikes and extremely long swords, which they wield with both hands, were useless, as their horses were slipping and they were oppressed by heavy chain-mail. That protective covering, worn by all their chiefs and nobles, iron-plated and made from very hard leather, is impenetrable to blows, but most inconvenient, if anyone is knocked down by a charge of the enemy and tries to get up. Besides, they were being swallowed by the deep, soft snow. [4] The Roman soldiers, moving easily because of their cuirasses and attacking with their javelins and lances, and when the occasion demanded it, with their light swords, stabbed the defenceless Sarmatians at close quarters (for it is not their custom to defend themselves with shields), until the few who had survived the battle managed to hide themselves in the marshes. There they perished from the savage winter and their wounds. [5] After the news reached Rome, Marcus Aponius, the governor of Moesia, was granted a triumphal statue, while the commanding officers of the legions, Aurelius Fulvus, Tettius Julianus and Numisius Lupus, received the insignia of consular rank. Otho was delighted and took the glory for himself, as if he himself had been successful in war and had expanded the empire by means of generals and armies that were his.

The internal dynamics of this passage are fascinating. Through the opening formulation, which accentuates the dangerous neglect of foreign affairs by Romans intent on civil war, Tacitus sets up the expectation that he is about to offer a strong warning about the negligence of Romans who fight each other, rather than policing their borders. Yet what follows is something of a comedy of errors. The bullish Rhoxolani, dangerously complacent and hybristic because of a minor defeat of two cohorts of auxiliaries in the previous year, are now faced with the full might of

the Third Legion, ready for action and well equipped to deal with the challenging terrain.[15] The polarised weaponry and fighting techniques of the two sides could even be said to have a touch of the gladiatorial arena about them, in that, when gladiators were pitted against one another, it was generally considered desirable for sharply differentiated "types" to fight, presumably to maximise enjoyment for the spectators. Yet in that context it was also expected that both gladiators would have something of an even chance at victory: a swift bloodbath was not the object of the exercise.[16]

In this battle, however, the Rhoxolani are barely able to trouble the Roman legionaries: the barbarian cavalry, bogged down in the snow through the weight of their protective chain mail, have lost all capacity for speedy manoeuvres on their horses.[17] They are strikingly described in section two with the words *velut vincti caedebantur*, "slaughtered like men in chains," a phrase which within the passage proleptically points to the very mechanism of their defeat, their heavy chain mail.[18] Tacitus thereby elegantly plays with the sense of *peripeteia*, "reversal of fortune," as chain mail which would normally be intrinsic to the invincibility of these cavalry is deftly redefined and cast instead as fetters which guarantee their utter powerlessness. Yet *velut vincti* is also a choice and intriguing expression, if we look beyond the immediate text and context. It occurs before Tacitus only once, in a passage of Livy (28.2.9), describing a battle in Spain during the second Punic war, when the Roman commander Marcus Silanus and his troops descend upon some complacent Celtiberians:

> quod ad fugam impedimento hostibus erat, id ad caedem eos velut vinctos praebebat
>
> The fact that the enemies were impeded in their flight offered them up for slaughter like men in chains

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[15] The legion in question is the *III Gallica*, originally raised by Julius Caesar in Gaul and based in Syria until AD 68, when it was transferred to Moesia by Nero (*Hist.* 1.79.1, 2.74.1, Suet. *Vesp.* 6.3). It was enthusiastically pro-Flavian in its loyalties.

[16] As Köhne and Ewigleben (2000) 47 note while discussing the nature of gladiators' armour, "the complete armour for the head, particularly for the face, with the good protection given to the right arm (the left arm was in any case covered by the shield) and to the lower legs, show that the intention was to avoid chance hits which would disable a man quickly, thus detracting from the drama and duration of the fights."

[17] Strabo 7.306 gives a rather different description of the fighting techniques of the Rhoxolani.

[18] Santoro L'hoir (2006) 72–79 discusses more generally Tacitus' interest in the vocabulary and imagery of binding, which she sees as often having tragic connotations.

Livy here uses the phrase with a sharp sense of irony, as the normally nimble Celtiberian troops are rooted to the spot, like birds caught in lime.[19] This image of troops being enchained clearly appealed to Tacitus' imagination and prompted him to redeploy it in an especially appropriate context (given the chain mail of the Rhoxolani).[20]

However, there may be more to consider in Tacitus' expression than its relationship with this Livian intertext. There are perhaps two further conceptual links suggested by the phrase. The first involves the notion of the triumph, in which chained prisoners were led in procession prior to the execution of the enemy leaders:[21] this has interestingly wry connotations if we consider the end of Tacitus' passage, where Marcus Aponius is unsatisfyingly awarded a triumphal statue for this minor victory. Instead of a meaningful triumphal procession at the centre, we are given language suggestive of a triumph, but located at the margins, embedded in the battle description itself, and enacted by common soldiers. Tacitus is always alive to the power of suggestive juxtaposition and ironic antithesis in arranging his narrative (whether on a small or a large scale). So here too he instantaneously traverses the considerable geographical distance between Moesia and Rome to juxtapose the hollow award of Aponius' triumphal statue with the reality of an effortless Roman victory, which generated no prisoners, and in which Aponius himself appears to have played no direct part.[22]

There is a second conceptual link suggested by the phrase *velut vincti*. Given the nature of this battle (such an easy victory for the Roman

[19] Earlier in the passage Livy draws attention to the way in which the rough terrain defuses the usual speed of the Celtiberians: *ceterum asperitas locorum et Celtiberis, quibus in proelio concursare mos est, velocitatem inutilem faciebat* (Livy 28.2.7).

[20] There is also an emotive appearance of the idea in Calgacus' speech to his men before the battle of Mons Graupius when he says of the Romans: *clausos quodam modo ac vinctos di nobis tradiderunt* (*Agr.* 32.3). Cf. too Arminius' stirring words to his men in direct speech: *en Varus eodemque iterum fato vinctae legiones!* (*Ann.* 1.65.4). Morgan (2003) 356 draws attention to the figurative language of these two passages (together with *Hist.*1.79) to argue for a textual emendation at *Histories* 3.18.1, where he proposes *forte vincti* for *forte victi* transmitted by the Mediceus.

[21] For chained prisoners in the triumphal procession, see Ov. *Tr.* 4.2.19–21: *ergo omnis populus poterit spectare triumphos . . . | vinclaque captiva reges cervice gerentes.* On creative play with the topography of triumphs (in Rome at least), see Miller (2000).

[22] As Morgan (1993) 286 pithily puts it, "all that had happened was the expulsion of a tribe from an existing province." Morgan also sees Tacitus' wording at the end of 1.79 as intended to create "the strongest possible contrast with the praetorian mutiny occupying the next six chapters" and thus stresses the antithesis between "an enemy beyond the frontiers and one in the heart of Rome."

legionaries), we might have expected Tacitus to use a more familiar historiographical point of comparison instead of *velut vincti*. Thus one memorable commonplace of ancient historical writing, which apparently originated in Latin with Sallust, is the image of soldiers, often barbarians, being "slaughtered like animals."[23] Although this image does not appear explicitly in our passage of Tacitus, it is possible that it may still lurk in the background, and perhaps even offers a clue about Tacitus' artistic inspiration for this whole description. There are of course obvious passages from Flavian epic on Sarmatian fighting techniques, about which Tacitus must have known.[24] However, he was also influenced strongly in his historical writings by Virgil, allusions to whom regularly pepper his narrative, sometimes in suggestive clusters.[25] We may have another instance of the phenomenon here. An especially memorable sequence from *Georgics* 3 is the ethnography of Scythia (3.349–383), a region which adjoins the country of the Rhoxolani. Virgil's ethnography may also have been a passage which held special appeal for Tacitus as a historian, since potted ethnographical descriptions are one of the basic building blocks of ancient historiography.[26] There are hints too of the Virgilian intertext in the embedded ethnographical colouring which Tacitus adds to his battle scene, as he seems to freeze-frame the action and lapses momentarily into an ethnographical narrative mode (embracing the 'timeless present').[27]

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[23] Sall. *Cat.* 58.21 (*sicuti pecora trucidemini*), Sall. *Hist.* 4.67 (*ceteri vicem pecorum obtruncabantur*), [*Ep. Caes.*] 1.4.1 (*pecoris modo conscissam*), Liv. 5.44.7 (*velut pecudes trucidandos*), 25.16.19 (*pecorum modo … trucidentur*), 28.16.6 (*trucidatio velut pecorum*), Vell. 119.2 (*more pecudum trucidaverat*), Tac. *Ann.* 4.25.2 (*modo pecorum trahi occidi capi*), Amm. 14.2.7 (*pecudum ritu inertium trucidantur*). See too Woodman (1977) 202, Kraus (1994) 288. Cf. Wilfred Owen, *Anthem for Doomed Youth*: "What passing bells for those who die as cattle?" and Fussell (1975) 239–243.

[24] Tacitus was probably also inspired by more obvious intertexts from epic, where descriptions of Sarmatian armoured cavalry proliferate: *ingentis frenator Sarmata conti* (Val. Flacc. 6.162; and the lengthy description at 6.231–242), *didici* | … *quo turbine contum* | *Sauromates* … | *tenderet* (Stat. *Ach.* 2.131–134), *sustentata genu per campum pondera conti* | *Sarmatici* (Sil. 15.684–685). See further Syme (1978) 165.

[25] Draeger (1882) 127–129 lists major Virgilian borrowing by Tacitus, but the intertextual relationship continues to generate interest. See for instance Baxter (1971) and (1972); Miller (1986); Putnam (1989); Pagán (1999) 305–306 and (2002); Keitel (2008).

[26] Tacitus' allusions to Virgil's *Aeneid* have generally attracted more attention than his evocation of the *Georgics*, but see for example Martin and Woodman (1989) 172 for Tacitus alluding to *G.* 4.6 at *Ann.* 4.32.2, Woodman and Martin (1996) for Tacitus alluding to *G.* 2.174–175 at *Ann.* 3.55.5, and Woodman (2009a) 1–4 for an allusion to *G.* 3.544–545 at *Ann.* 2.45.3.

[27] Ethnographical narrative touches include 1.79.2 *namque mirum dictum, ut sit omnis Sarmatarum virtus velut extra ipsos. nihil ad pedestrem pugnam tam ignavum: ubi per*

In Virgil's description, life in this chilly region is generally tough: the Scythians have to chip away at their frozen wine to get a drink, while their unkempt beards freeze and their clothes grow stiff with ice.[28] Yet the landscape offers one advantage, in that the frozen animals are readily offered up to the Scythian hunters in a bizarre reworking of golden age imagery (*Georgics* 3.367–375):

> interea toto non setius aëre ningit:
> intereunt pecudes, stant circumfusa pruinis
> corpora magna boum, confertoque agmine cervi
> torpent mole nova et summis vix cornibus exstant.
> hos non immissis canibus, non cassibus ullis
> puniceaeve agitant pavidos formidine pennae,
> sed frustra oppositum trudentis pectore montem
> comminus obtruncant ferro graviterque rudentis
> caedunt et magno laeti clamore reportant.

> Meanwhile, snow fills the whole sky just the same: cattle die, the bulky bodies of the oxen stand there encased in frost, and in tightly packed ranks, the deer grow sluggish with the strange weight [sc. of the snow], and barely rise above it with the tips of their horns. These beasts they hunt, not by releasing dogs, nor with any nets, nor by driving the panic-stricken creatures, terrified by the device of the purple feather, but as the animals try in vain to push with their chests the piled up mountain of snow, they kill them at close quarters with their weapons, slaughter them bellowing loudly, and cheerfully carry them home with loud shouts.

The points of contact between Virgil's description here and Tacitus' account of the battle in Moesia are clear and striking: in both passages, the 'victims' are buried in snow and unable to move, while the 'hunters' are able to come right up to their victims and kill them with ease.[29] Virgil's merry Scythians become Tacitus' nimble Roman soldiers, while Virgil's

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turmas advenere vix ulla acies obstiterit; 1.79.3 *gladii, quos praelongos utraque manu regunt*; 1.79.3 *id principibus et nobilissimo cuique tegimen, ferreis lamminis aut praeduro corio consertum, ut adversus ictus impenetrabile ita impetu hostium provolutis inhabile ad resurgendum*; 1.79.4 (*neque enim scuto defendi mos est*).

[28] West (2003) 156 points to "the classical tendency to emphasise the cold of Scythia," observing wryly in footnote 19 that "the near Arctic conditions which classical writers ascribe to the area (e.g. Vergil *Georgics* 3.349–383) would of course have prevented the keeping of herds of cattle and horses on which the Scythian lifestyle depended." The freezing point of wine depends on the alcohol content, but usually ranges between 15 and 23 degrees Fahrenheit.

[29] It is interesting that the ease of hunting facilitated by the icy surroundings has something in common with the (disapproving) description of easy hunting offered by Curtius Rufus in the context of his ethnography of India (a much hotter realm): *venatus maximus labor est inclusa vivario animalia inter vota cantusque paelicum figere* (8.9.28).

helpless hunted beasts are now Tacitus' Sarmatian Rhoxolani.[30] There is even some suggestive overlap in the closural sections of the two passages through another verbal echo: where Virgil's simple Scythian hunters bring the slaughtered animals back home and are depicted as being happy while so doing (*G.* 3.375 *laeti*), Tacitus likewise draws attention to Otho's delight in the victory (*Hist.* 1.79.5 *laeto Othone et gloriam in se trahente*). However, the artless simplicity of the innocent Scythian hunters is much less troubling than Tacitus' acquisitive Otho, laying claim from afar to *gloria* to which he is not entitled.[31]

Yet Tacitus' strategy of bestialising the Rhoxolani as Virgilian prey surely undermines the supposed achievement of the Roman victory, since the legionaries' scope for demonstrating impressive martial *virtus* is compromised by the fact that the heavily laden Rhoxolani are left floundering helplessly in the snow. We can also take a broader view. In ideological terms, the notion of borrowing a passage from a work such as the *Georgics*, which (despite its darker notes) self-consciously situates itself as part of the reconstruction of Roman identity after the destructive sequence of late Republican civil wars, is a powerful and expressive device. Where Virgil in the *Georgics* attempts to enact some sort of closure to self-destruction, Tacitus instead locates his allusive passage early on in the narrative, as his succession of civil wars is only just beginning to get started; and instead of the static timelessness of the Virgilian ethnography, Tacitus gives us a chronologically anchored passage, which serves as a prelude to much more serious problems in Moesia, which are just around the corner.

This brings us to the expressive external dynamics of the passage, both intratextually, in terms of its location within the *Histories*, and in broader historical terms in its relation to events beyond the artificial endpoint of the *Histories* (imposed accidentally by the loss of the rest of the manuscript). We have already seen how Tacitus sets up this battle sequence as a kind of 'false alarm', despite the fact that his audience had probably expected more of a knife-edge clash between Romans and foreign enemies. Why then *does* he devote a whole chapter to a battle, which was generally rather a non-event, and ignored by our other sources? The easy answer would be to say that it is just a pleasant hiatus,

[30] We can compare here Ammianus Marcellinus' description of the Scythians, which casts them as beasts: *ferarum taetro ritu vescuntur* (22.8.42). For more on depictions of the Scythians, see Bravo (2000).

[31] I owe this last point to Cynthia Damon.

offering readers some much needed entertainment and injecting some 'wholesome' fighting against foreign foes in a book where so far, what military action there has been is grimly self-destructive and directed against fellow Romans. Yet, if Tacitus sets out to entertain us, then any respite is distinctly short-lived. For one thing, this is certainly not the end of military troubles in this region. So Tacitus records a much more serious threat to the empire's stability at *Hist.* 3.46. After Vitellius had withdrawn the Moesian legions from the area in September 69 in order to fight the Flavians in northern Italy, only a skeleton force of auxiliaries was left to confront any foreign threat. That threat soon became real when, in October 69, the Dacians crossed the Danube. They were only curtailed because Vespasian's general Mucianus happened to be travelling through the area at the time and was able to send in the Sixth Legion to confront the invaders (3.46.2–3):

> [2] mota et Dacorum gens numquam fida, tunc sine metu, abducto e Moesia exercitu. sed prima rerum quieti speculabantur: ubi flagrare Italiam bello, cuncta in vicem hostilia accepere, expugnatis cohortium alarumque hibernis utraque Danuvii ripa potiebantur, iamque castra legionum excindere parabant, ni Mucianus sextam legionem opposuisset, Cremonensis victoriae gnarus, ac ne externa moles utrimque ingrueret, si Dacus Germanusque diversi inrupissent. [3] adfuit, ut saepe alias, fortuna populi Romani, quae Mucianum viresque Orientis illuc tulit, et quod Cremonae interim transegimus.[32]

> [2] There was also a movement amongst the Dacians. Never a trustworthy people, they now had nothing to fear, after the army had been withdrawn from Moesia, but they merely looked on at the first stages of the civil wars and stayed quiet. When they heard that Italy was ablaze with war and that everything was alternating in cycles of violence, they stormed the winter quarters of the cohorts and cavalry, and began to occupy both banks of the Danube. They were just about to destroy the legionary camp as well, had not Mucianus sent the Sixth Legion against them. He knew about the victory at Cremona, but was anxious in case a double foreign invasion threatened, if the Dacians and the Germans had broken in from opposite directions. [3] As so often at other times, Rome's good fortune saved the day, having brought Mucianus on the scene with the forces of the East, and because meanwhile we settled matters at Cremona.

We can see from these later developments that the opportunist invasion of the Rhoxolani at *Histories* 1.79 should have served as a clear warning, despite the easy victory on that occasion, but the Romans are so wrapped up in their own civil wars that they neglect even basic precautions.

[32] See Wellesley (1972) appendix six, 208–215.

These Rhoxolani may have been dealt with very easily, but at least there were Roman legionaries on the spot in case of an emergency. For the Dacians, the temptations to exploit the situation are even stronger, now that the civil war has snowballed and legions are being removed from the margins to fight each other more centrally: we can think here of Lucan's extraordinary inverted catalogue in the first book of the *Pharsalia*, when he tellingly lists all the foreign peoples overjoyed at the departure of Roman legionaries from the margins. His relentless listing of all these delighted enemies of Rome eloquently expresses the dangers unleashed by the redeployment of Roman military forces for civil war (1.392–495). Perhaps Tacitus had this passage from Lucan in mind, but, even if he did not, the clarification that the Dacians were no longer restrained by fear activates the Sallustian theory of *metus hostilis*, that is 'fear of the enemy', as a healthy force which keeps a nation alert and ready for action. The presence of people like the Dacians on their borders should have triggered feelings of *metus hostilis* in the Romans, but to no avail. Instead, the Dacians, freed from fear of the Roman enemy, are left able to make incursions across the Danube, always an unreliable protective boundary at the best of times, since it sometimes froze in winter (Ov. *Tr.* 3.10).[33] Moreover, readers of Tacitus' published narrative who had the benefit of hindsight would have remembered other disquieting events, including the defeat and killing of Fonteius Agrippa, the newly appointed governor of Moesia, in January AD 70 (Jos. *BJ* 8.90), and the loss of a legion and its commander during Domitian's campaigns against the Sarmatians in AD 92, which Tacitus highlights in his prologue to the *Histories* at 1.2.1.[34]

So where does this discussion leave us? We have come a long way from the paradoxical notion raised at the start of this chapter, that battle narratives in ancient historiography were often a device to give pleasure.

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[33] Ovid in *Tristia* 3.10 was inspired by Virgil's Scythian ethnography. See Martin (1966), Besslich (1972), Evans (1975). For a different perspective on the Danube (and other rivers) as a boundary, see Sen. *NQ* 1 *Pr.* 9–10 *O quam ridiculi sunt mortalium termini! Vltra Istrum Dacus non exeat: Strymo Thracas includat: Parthis obstet Euphrates: Danubius Sarmatica ac Romana disterminet: Rhenus Germaniae modum faciat: Pyrenaeus medium inter Gallias et Hispanias iugum extollat: inter Aegyptum et Aethiopias arenarum inculta vastitas iaceat! Si quis formicis det intellectum hominis, nonne et illae unam aream in multas provincias divident?*. For rivers freezing over in winter see Suet. *Dom.* 6.2 (Rhine), Flor. 2.28 (Danube), and Herodian 6.7.7 (Rhine).

[34] See Jos. *BJ* 7.89–96 for the defeat of Fonteius Agrippa. Tacitus highlights problems in this region elsewhere: *coortae in nos Sarmatarum ac Sueborum gentes, nobilitatus cladibus mutuis Dacus* (*H.* 1.2.1, with Damon (2003) 86–87) and *tot exercitibus in Moesia Daciaque ... amissi* (*Agr.* 41.2). See further Jones (1992) 150–155.

There are certainly elements of enjoyment to be gained from Tacitus' account. So readers could marvel at the strange fighting techniques of a tribe from beyond the margins of the empire and revel in the refreshing depiction of legionaries gaining an easy victory over a foreign enemy, especially after the self-destructive bloodbath of civil war which precedes. Furthermore, there is also some degree of aesthetic pleasure to be gained from 'unlocking' the Virgilian intertext and analysing the impact of Tacitus' choosing to borrow inspiration from such a source. Certainly, Quintilian characterised historiography as a genre *proxima poetis* (10.1.31), and the shadowy presence of a memorable poetic text used to add layers of meaning to real events is typical of Tacitus' creative narrative techniques.

However, this battle scene at *Histories* 1.79 does not exist in a vacuum, and, as such, our enjoyment must be tempered by other factors. So even an apparently reassuring Roman victory such as this one can implement a degree of foreshadowing. This battle contains within it seeds of trouble to come, not just during the civil war, but in the decades to follow, where the Danube frontier will largely replace the Rhine as the primary area of Roman military activity. No doubt, in the missing books of the *Histories*, Tacitus would have returned to this theatre of war, and by narrating more ambivalent scenes of Roman military encounters with a powerful enemy, he would have progressively redefined the way in which his readers had to view this initially engaging clash between Roman legionaries and the admittedly rather hopeless Sarmatian Rhoxolani. After all, as Florus says of the Sarmatians from a second-century AD perspective, *tanta barbaria est ut nec intellegant pacem* (2.29), "Such is their barbarity that they do not even understand what peace is." Finally, David Levene, while considering the representation of warfare in Tacitus more widely, makes the point that, even in the famous passage at *Annals* 4.33 cited at the start of this chapter, what Tacitus actually highlights is the enjoyment to be drawn from *varietates proeliorum*, "the ups and downs of battle."[35] He argues that this suggests not just exciting oscillations of fortune within an individual battle (pointedly absent from *Histories* 1.79), but also different sides winning different battles over a series of tightly contested martial encounters (so that *Histories* 1.79 can be seen as the start of a chain). Perhaps in the end our apparently uplifting battle scene, when considered in context, has much more in common with the gloomy surrounding

[35] Levene (2009).

narrative than initially seems to be the case. If the description of the battle does offer any pleasure, there are certainly strings attached, and, at least for a contemporary Roman audience observing the action, what they feel may well have hints of the *misera laetitia* (*Hist.* 2.45.3) felt by internal protagonists contemplating the horrors of civil war after the first battle of Bedriacum.

CHAPTER NINE

AC RVRSVS NOVA LABORVM FACIES: TACITUS' REPETITION OF VIRGIL'S WARS AT *HISTORIES* 3.26–34*

Timothy A. Joseph

Tacitus' *Histories* are repetitive, and deliberately so. He presents many of the characters and events in the *Histories* as repetitive of other characters and events, from this work[1] and from earlier literature. One prominent model text is the *Aeneid*. For example, the death of weary, defenseless old Galba in *Histories* 1 can be read as a grim repetition of the death of Priam in *Aeneid* 2:[2] in each work the old monarch's end marks the beginning of a new Roman struggle.

In this chapter I turn to another 'repetitive' passage in the *Histories*, 3.26–34, the account of the Flavian defeat of the Vitellian forces outside Cremona (3.26–29), and the subsequent sack of that city (3.30–34). At several points in this passage, Tacitus imports language from Virgil's prototypical Roman wars, the Trojan War of *Aeneid* 2 and the Latin War of *Aeneid* 7–12, the latter of which Virgil presents as a repetition of the former.[3] In this way, I will argue, Tacitus perpetuates the cycle of war begun by Virgil, and extends it into his civil war account.

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* I am thankful to the audience at the University of Virginia for many productive ideas on this topic, and also to John Jacobs for his helpful comments on an earlier draft of this chapter.

[1] On Tacitus' strategy of repetition within the *Histories*, see Damon (2006), who traces the recurrence of similar minor characters and events in Tacitus' accounts of the reigns of Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian. At 276 she concludes: "[T]he comparisons that we have examined are present in the text because Tacitus wanted the reader to see the parallels and contrasts, not because these events demanded inclusion." And see Woodman and Martin (1996) on *Ann.* 3.55.5 on patterns of repetition of events, language, and themes in the *Annals*.

[2] As Benario (1972) and Ash (1999b) 79–83 have discussed.

[3] That repetition is a characteristic trope of epic has been argued by Quint (1993) 50–96, in his work on the *Aeneid*, and Hardie (1993) in his work on the epics that follow and in many ways repeat the scenes and themes of Virgil's poem. Hardie traces this phenomenon back to epic's origins: "As a product of the oral tradition epic has a set towards continuation; from these origins it also carries with it the habit of repetition, the

Many Virgilian correspondences in this passage from *Histories* 3 have been noted—by, for example, Schmaus long ago, and more recently by Baxter.[4] Some of them seem to carry little relevance. And certainly some of the similarities between this passage and Virgil's battle scenes can be attributed to the authors' shared use of the topoi of the siege and the *urbs capta*.[5] But the cases that I will revisit here—which have close verbal affinity with their Virgilian models, are closely concentrated together, and come at weighted positions in the account—seem to be meaningful and complementary repetitions. Let us get right into the passage, whose treatment I have broken up into four sections.

1

We begin at *Histories* 3.27. After victory over the Vitellian armies in the Second Battle of Bedriacum (3.16–18), the Flavian general Antonius Primus moves to take Cremona. Standing in his way just outside the city is the Vitellian camp, which Antonius decides to attack. Following some combat from afar, and the encircling of the camp, the Flavians attack in a *testudo*, at 3.27.2–3:

> tum elatis super capita scutis densa testudine succedunt. Romanae utrimque artes: pondera saxorum Vitelliani provolvunt, disiectam fluitantemque testudinem lanceis contisque scrutantur, donec soluta compage scutorum exsangues aut laceros prosternerent multa cum strage.[6]
>
> Then they raised their shields above their heads and approached in a tightly-packed *testudo*. On each side were Roman ways of war: the Vitellians rolled forward the weight of rocks, and with spears and poles probed the *testudo*, now separating and wavering. At last, when they had broken that structure of shields, they laid low the dying or the wounded with much slaughter.

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repetition of verbal formulas, scenes, themes and structures" (14). On Virgil's fashioning of the Latin War as a repetition of the Trojan War, see Quint, as well as Anderson (1957).

[4] Schmaus (1887) is the seminal work on Virgilian correspondences in Tacitus. Baxter (1971) looks at the clusters of Virgilian phrasing in *Hist.* 3, at 3.26–34 (the sack of Cremona), 3.71–72 (the burning of the Capitol), and 3.82–84 (the death of Vitellius), though not all of his arguments for allusion are convincing. Keitel (2008) revisits the reminiscences in 3.84.

[5] On the use of these topoi in the *Aeneid*, and across many genres, see Rossi (2004) 17–53 (on the *urbs capta*) and 173–188 (on the conventions of the siege). See too Paul (1982) on the topos of the *urbs capta*.

[6] The text of the *Histories* is that of Heubner (1978). All translations are my own.

The language in this passage reminds us of *Aeneid* 9.507–518. There Virgil describes the Volscians' and Rutulians' attempt to take the camp that the Trojans have set up outside of Latinus' city:

> quaerunt pars aditum et scalis ascendere muros,
> qua rara est acies interlucetque corona
> non tam spissa viris. telorum effundere contra
> omne genus Teucri ac duris detrudere contis,
> adsueti longo muros defendere bello.
> saxa quoque infesto volvebant pondere, si qua
> possent tectam aciem perrumpere, cum tamen omnis
> ferre iuvet subter densa testudine casus.
> nec iam sufficiunt. nam qua globus imminet ingens,
> immanem Teucri molem volvuntque ruuntque,
> quae stravit Rutulos late armorumque resolvit
> tegmina.

> Some seek an entrance, and to climb the walls with ladders, at points where the line is thin and where their defense, not as packed with men, shows daylight. In response the Teucrians poured out every type of weapon, and pushed them away with strong poles—accustomed as they were from their long war to defending their walls. They also were rolling out rocks of threatening weight, to see if by chance they could break through that covered troop, although beneath the tightly-packed *testudo* [the Latins] were willing to suffer every type of strike. But they could not hold up any longer. For, wherever that huge ball of men threatened, the Teucrians rolled out and threw down a boulder, which laid low the Rutulians far and wide, and broke that covering of arms.

We see that in both sieges the assailants attack the fortress walls "in a tightly-packed *testudo*" (*densa testudine*). Virgil's anachronistic inclusion of the *testudo* here during his account of Rome's origins invites us to read the passage as a prototype for Roman siege warfare.[7] And Tacitus appears to pick up on, or repeat, the prototype when he brings Virgil's precise phrase *densa testudine* into the siege of the Vitellian camp. The only other instance in Latin literature where *testudo* is modified by *densus* comes during Lucan's account of Caesar's siege of the Pompeian stronghold Massilia in *Bellum Civile* 3.[8] At 3.474–484, a passage that is

[7] So similarly Rossi (2004) 187 on Virgil's inclusion of anachronistic details from contemporary Roman warfare in the sieges of the *Aeneid*: "Because of their natural quality of being 'out of time,' anachronisms generate an effect of narrative polychrony … [The] presence [of anachronisms] intensifies the anachronic (or rather, polychronic) quality of the primary narrative of the text."

[8] Robbert (1917) 94 brings together these three instances of *densa testudine*, though without judgment on their relationship.

likewise modeled on our *Aeneid* 9 passage, Lucan describes the Roman *testudo*'s attack on Massilia's walls, which are defended by the city's Greek inhabitants:

> ut tamen hostiles densa testudine muros
> tecta subit virtus, armisque innexa priores
> arma ferunt, galeamque extensus protegit umbo,
> quae prius ex longo nocuerunt missa recessu
> iam post terga cadunt. nec Grais flectere iactum
> aut facilis labor est longinqua ad tela parati
> tormenti mutare modum; sed pondere solo
> contenti nudis evolvunt saxa lacertis.
> dum fuit armorum series, ut grandine tecta
> innocua percussa sonant, sic omnia tela
> respuit.

> Then the [Roman] force, covered in a tightly-packed *testudo*, attacked the enemy walls. The men in front kept their weapons attached to others' weapons, and the extended bosses of the shields protected their helmets. The missiles thrown from a great distance, which had harmed the *testudo* at first, were now falling behind their backs. Nor was it an easy task for the Greeks to alter their range, or to change the engine that was set for long-tossed weapons. But, striving with their bare arms, they rolled out rocks of great weight to the ground. While that structure of arms held up, it spat off every missile, just as a roof rattles when struck by harmless hail.

In the Virgilian prototype and in the two later passages, the besieged respond to the *testudo* in the same way, by rolling down large rocks from above. In fact, all three authors use, within one sentence, the very same words to describe this counter-attack: *saxum*, *pondus*, and a form of *volvo*.[9] It is notable that, as is often the case when Tacitus imports Virgilian language, here he alters slightly the imported phrase: while Virgil (and Lucan nearly identically after him) writes of how the Trojans rolled out rocks of threatening weight (*Aen.* 9.512 *saxa … infesto volvebant pondere*), Tacitus has the Vitellians roll forward the weight of rocks (*Hist.* 3.27.3 *pondera saxorum … provolvunt*). Such minor variation or "tweaking" of the syntax or word order in his Virgilian model we see often, as at 3.28 and 3.30.1, passages that I address below.[10]

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[9] And in both Virgil's (*Aen.* 9.510) and Tacitus' (*Hist.* 3.27.3) sieges the defenders also use poles (*contis*) to break up the *testudo*. Hunink (1992) on 3.481 observes the apparent influence of the Virgilian passage on the Lucanian passage, also noting (in n. 1) that "[t]he passages of Vergil and Lucan have further influenced Tac. *Hist.* 3.27."

[10] Syme (1958) 357–358 and Baxter (1971) 98 also note Tacitus' practice of altering the Virgilian phrases that he imports. Syme attributes this practice to the avoidance of

At all three battles the result of the defense is temporary victory for the besieged, and the slaughter of many of the assailants. Further, at *Aeneid* 9.517–518, we read that the Trojans' boulder "breaks that covering of arms" (*armorumque resolvit tegmina*); Tacitus employs the same verb, *solvo*, for the breaking of the *testudo*, as well as a similarly artful periphrasis for the *testudo* itself: *soluta compage scutorum*.[11] And of the resulting slaughter that concludes this episode Tacitus uses two derivatives of *sterno* (3.27.3 *prosternerent multa cum strage*). Virgil had likewise ended his description of the failed attack with a form of this gory verb (*stravit*, at *Aeneid* 9.517).

The parallels here in diction, as well as in the sequence of events, are many. When we consider that Dio, in his lengthy account of the second battle of Cremona and its aftermath (epitome of 64.11–15), makes no mention of the Flavian *testudo* or the Vitellian defense of their camp, then it is not a stretch to conclude that Tacitus has crafted his siege at Cremona as a recurrence of Virgil's "model" Roman siege in Latium.[12]

Here in *Histories* 3.27 Tacitus may at the same time be engaging directly with Lucan as well. As we have seen, the closeness in diction invites us to read the siege outside Cremona as a repetition of the siege in Virgil's Latium, and also of its iteration at Massilia in the *Bellum Civile*. Furthermore, written into the account are two phrases that may strengthen the connection between Tacitus' and Lucan's sieges. Recall that at 3.27.3 Tacitus describes the rupture of the Flavian *testudo* with the phrase *soluta compage scutorum*. The phrase is conspicuous not just for its characteristically Virgilian periphrasis, but also for its possible provenance in the introduction to the *Bellum Civile*. In the programmatic passage 1.70–82, Lucan presents the fated fall of great things (1.81 *in se magna ruunt*, "great things fall upon themselves"), with imagery drawn

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metrical rhythms, which I do not think were as anathematic to Tacitus as Syme supposes (see briefly my discussion of *vacuas domos et inania templa* (3.33.2) in section 2, as well as discussions about the disputed hexameter at *Ann.* 1.1.1 by Henry (1991) 3003, with n. 26, and Lauletta (1998) 96–101).

[11] Lucan's periphrasis for the *testudo* (3.482 *armorum series*) may also be drawn from Virgil's *armorum tegmina*. On such periphrases as a hallmark of poetic and Virgilian style, see Horsfall (2000) on *Aen.* 7.632.

[12] It should also be noted that the diction and imagery used in 3.27 closely resemble that used of another civil war siege, the siege of Placentia, narrated by Tacitus himself in *Hist.* 2.22. There the names are different (it's Vitellians besieging Othonians, in 3.27 the Vitellians are the besieged); but the action, Roman armies besieging Roman armies, is the same. And there too, as Ash (2002) 268–272 has discussed, with his diction Tacitus seems to point us back to the proto-Roman siege in *Aen.* 9.

from the Stoic conception of the collapse of the universe. Pivotal in this collapse—a collapse that finds a mirror in the civil war that makes up Lucan's poem—is the dissolution of the universe's framework. This dissolution Lucan captures succinctly with the phrase *compage soluta* ("when the structure is broken") in 1.72.[13] Just before this passage, Lucan writes generally and, again, programmatically of the task that awaits him, at 1.68: *immensumque aperitur opus* ("an immeasurable task opens before me").[14] It may be no coincidence that at *Histories* 3.26.1, when beginning his account of the siege of the Vitellian camp, Tacitus states: *ut Cremonam venere, novum immensumque opus occurrit* ("As they came to Cremona, a new and immeasurable task met them"). Here *opus* refers on the plainest level to the Vitellian camp that confronted the Flavians. But, if Tacitus with these words is referring to Lucan's programmatic phrase, then he may be setting up the siege in the following chapter as a *new* (*novum*) manifestation of Lucanian war. Similarly, the phrase *soluta compage* at 3.27.3, while working on the technical level to describe the breaking of the Flavian *testudo*, may also offer a signal to the reader. The conspicuous phrase could serve to fashion the chaos and slaughter at the Vitellian camp as a microcosm of the chaos and slaughter that we encounter on a grand scale in Lucan's civil war.

If Tacitus is casting the siege in chapters 26–27 as a repetition of the sieges in Virgil's and Lucan's wars, then he also makes sure to highlight a significant difference. While the war in Latium in *Aeneid* 9 is fundamentally a civil war fought between proto-Romans, Virgil underlines the markedly different combat skills on the two sides. As we saw above, the Rutulians attack in their *testudo*, a type of etiology of Roman combat inserted by Virgil. The Trojans, on the other hand, use their own native skill, wall defense, as Virgil notes at 9.511: *adsueti longo muros defendere bello*. At Massilia too Lucan conspicuously distinguishes the combatants in this civil war clash. Caesar's troops use the characteristically Roman *testudo*, and the Greekness of the Massilians is underscored when Lucan begins his description of their counterattack with *nec Grais* … (3.478). Here amid Lucan's civil war is a struggle between Caesar's brutish Romans and the more deliberative and defensive Massilian Greeks.[15]

[13] On the use of *compages* by Lucan and other Stoics to describe the structure of the universe, see Lapidge (1979) 360–361.

[14] For the suggestion that at *Hist.* 1.2.1 Tacitus introduces his *opus*, i.e. his civil wars, as greater than Lucan's *immensum opus*, see O'Gorman (1995) 119–120.

[15] Earlier in the account Lucan presents the Massilians' lengthy, reasoned plea for peace (3.307–355), and then Caesar's short, fiery rejection of that plea (3.358–372).

The differences brought out in these model sieges collapse in Tacitus' repetition of them. As we have seen, the military tactics (*testudo*, defense by rolling out stones from above) are identical at all three sieges. But, as opposed to Virgil and Lucan, Tacitus emphasizes the specific Romanness of the attack *and* the defense: *Romanae utrimque artes* ("On each side were Roman ways of war"). So Tacitus makes the defense as distinctly Roman as the *testudo*, in the process highlighting further the civil nature of this conflict. This succinct statement—pointedly placed between the most conspicuous allusions to the epic scenes—announces that Tacitus' siege-scene is to surpass its models, by becoming more Roman, and more civil.[16]

2

After establishing in the siege attempt at 3.27 that the fight for Cremona may be read as a futile reenactment of similar struggles in Rome's epic past, Tacitus continues to encourage recollection of Virgil's wars in the chapters that follow. The repetitions often come when he is capturing in a short phrase or *sententia* the general atmosphere at Cremona. So in 3.28 the Flavians renew their assault on the Vitellian camp, this time successfully scaling the walls. Baxter has argued that the verbs used to describe their attack (*quatere, scandere, prensare*) are Virgilian in origin.[17] Certainly reminiscent of Virgil's Troy is the final image that Tacitus leaves us with, before moving to a different episode in the battle:

> integri cum sauciis, semineces cum expirantibus volvuntur, varia pereuntium forma et <u>omni imagine mortium</u>.
>
> The unhurt were rolled up with the wounded, the half-dead with the barely breathing, with various forms of the perishing, and every image of death.

Hunink (1992) on 3.302 (with n. 2 on page 146) also notes how Lucan may have chosen to emphasize that this battle was one between Romans and Greeks, in the build-up to the climactic meeting of Romans and Romans at Pharsalus.

16 O'Gorman (1995) 119 remarks similarly on Tacitus' assertions at *Hist.* 1.2.1 of the magnitude of his work, relative to earlier civil war works: "Tacitus' civil wars, then, are the same as other civil wars, only more so."

17 Baxter (1971) 95–96 discusses how in 3.28 Tacitus packs into one sentence several verbs with which Virgil describes the attack on Troy: *quatere* (*Aen.* 2.611), *scandere* (*Aen.* 2.237), and *prensare* (*Aen.* 2.444). At 97–98 he addresses the use in the Cremona passage of *labi*, *subire*, *obruere*, and other verbs of motion, which "echo one of the dominant images of *Aeneid* 2, the violent forces of nature which destroy Troy" (98).

The gory scene here after the struggle in the Vitellian camp brings to mind Aeneas's recollection of the scene at Troy after the first fit of fighting. At 2.364–366 and 368–369 he recalls:

> plurima perque vias sternuntur inertia passim
> corpora perque domos et religiosa deorum
> limina . . .
> . . . crudelis ubique
> luctus, ubique pavor et plurima mortis imago.
>
> Very many motionless bodies were strewn about here and there, throughout the streets, throughout homes and the sacred gateways of the gods . . . Everywhere was cruel grief, everywhere fear, and many an image of death.

Virgil's succinct articulation of the variety of deaths at Troy was not novel. For example, Thucydides writes similarly of the bloodshed at Corcyra at 3.81.5: πᾶσά τε ἰδέα κατέστη θανάτου ("and every form of death was there"). But Virgil's phrasing, as so often, found many imitators.[18] Ovid, for example, writes at *Tristia* 1.11.23 of his journey out to Pontus: *quocumque aspexi, nihil est nisi mortis imago* ("Wherever I looked, there was nothing except the image of death"). And Petronius' epic poet Eumolpus includes among the personified forces in his civil war *Letumque Insidiaeque et lurida Mortis imago* (*Satyricon* 124). Most conspicuously, Jerome quotes this *Aeneid* 2 passage twice when describing Rome's demise, first at *Epistle* 60.16, of Roman suffering at the hands of invading northerners:

> ubique luctus, ubique gemitus et plurima mortis imago. Romanus orbis ruit, et tamen cervix nostra erecta non flectitur.
>
> Everywhere was grief, everywhere lamentation, and many an image of death. The Roman world was falling down, but nevertheless our upright necks did not bend.

And then at *Epistle* 127.12, of the city's sack in AD 410 (an adaptation of *Aeneid* 2.364–365 and 369):

> plurima perque vias sparguntur inertia passim
> corpora perque domos, et plurima mortis imago.
>
> Very many motionless bodies were scattered here and there, throughout the streets and throughout homes, and there was many an image of death.

[18] On the phrase's afterlife see esp. Austin (1964) on *Aen.* 2.361 ff. and 2.369; as well as Schmaus (1887) 17 with n. 3; Heubner (1972) ad loc.; and Wellesley (1972) ad loc.

In both of these passages Jerome equates the ravaged Rome of his time with the Troy of *Aeneid* 2. This equation is precisely what Tacitus does in 3.28, with his adaptation of Virgil's phrase: *omni imagine mortium*. And in Tacitus' alteration there is meaningful amplification: Virgil's 'very many' (*plurima*) becomes 'every' (*omni*);[19] correspondingly, Virgil's singular death (*mortis*) is pluralized into *mortium*. The carnage outside Cremona mirrors[20] but at the same time outnumbers and thus surpasses that at Virgil's Troy. Magnifying further the gore in 3.28 is Tacitus' use here of a favorite stylistic effect of Virgil's, the *dicolon abundans*, which Conte defines as "the combination of two adjacent expressions apparently conveying the same idea, so that the second appears as a variation on the first."[21] Here the phrase *omni imagine mortium* redoubles the nearly synonymous preceding phrase *varia pereuntium forma*. Style corroborates meaning, and the images of death on Tacitus' battlefield multiply.

The connection between Cremona and Virgil's Troy becomes most clear at 3.33–34. But in the movement towards Cremona's end, Tacitus continues to bring in words and images from the *Aeneid*. At 3.31.1 we read of the Flavian troops making their way into Cremona itself: *iam legiones in testudinem glomerabantur* ("now the legions were gathering together into a *testudo*"). This is Tacitus' only use of *glomero*, a verb that Virgil uses 17 times, often of troops congregating for attack, at Troy in Book 2, as well as in Latium in Books 7–12 (at e.g. *Aeneid* 2.315, 2.727, 9.689 and 9.792).[22]

Another detail that lends a specifically Virgilian gloom to the sack of Cremona comes towards the end of the account, at 3.33.2. There we see the Flavian victors needlessly hurling torches into Cremona's vacant buildings: *faces in manibus, quas, ubi praedam egesserant, in vacuas domos et inania templa per lasciviam iaculabantur* ("In their hands they had torches, which, after they had carried out their booty, they were hurling into abandoned homes and empty temples, as a joke"). Tacitus' phrase here is drawn from *Aeneid* 6.269, a brief snapshot of the Underworld as Aeneas and the Sibyl are passing through: [*ibant*] *perque domos*

[19] I am thankful to John Miller for calling attention to Tacitus' emulative adaptation of *plurima* with *omni*. He also notes how Petronius' *lurida* in *lurida Mortis imago* (*Sat.* 124) acoustically (and perhaps parodically) responds to Virgil's *plurima*.

[20] So Baxter (1971) 97: "Tacitus subtly causes his readers to associate their feelings about the sack of Troy with the ensuing destruction of Cremona."

[21] Conte (1993) 208, cited in the discussion by O'Hara (1997) 248. Also addressing this Virgilian trope (which he calls "theme and variation") is Quinn (1968) 423–428.

[22] On Virgil's fondness for *glomero*, see Hardie (1994) on 9.33–34.

Ditis vacuas et inania regna ("[they were passing] through the abandoned homes and empty kingdoms of Dis").[23] The hexametrical rhythm of dactyl-dactyl-spondee with which Tacitus concludes his phrase (*-os et inania templa*) recalls Virgil's *-as et inania regna*. And so, by this verbal and metrical allusion, the enflamed wasteland of Cremona becomes, if only for a moment, the hell of Aeneas' *nekuia*.[24]

3

It is not Virgil's hell, but rather his burning Troy that Tacitus recalls at the conclusion of the Cremona episode. Let us look closely at 3.33.2–3.34.1:

> cum omnia sacra profanaque in ignes considerent, solum Mefitis templum stetit ante moenia, loco seu numine defensum. hic exitus Cremonae anno ducentisimo octogesimo sexto a primordio sui.
>
> When all things sacred and profane were settling down into flames, the temple of Mefitis alone stood outside the city walls, defended by its location or by the god. This was the end of Cremona, in the two-hundred and eighty-sixth year from its beginning.

Just before the city's epitaph proper, which begins with *hic exitus* at 3.34.1, Tacitus' final words for Cremona lay it to rest in flames. The words of fiery repose *omnia sacra profanaque in ignes considerent* follow closely the

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[23] Noting the allusion are Wellesley (1972) ad loc. and Heubner (1972) ad loc. Both also point to the recurrence of these adjectives in succession at *Hist.* 5.9.1, of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem: *vacuam sedem et inania arcana*.

As Stephen Harrison has pointed out to me, Tacitus may prepare us for this pit stop in Virgil's hell a few chapters earlier. At *Hist.* 3.30.1 (a passage to which we shall return in section 4) Tacitus describes the new challenges that the city of Cremona presents to the Flavian army: *ardua urbis moenia, saxeae turres, ferrati portarum obices*. This description of the entrance to Cremona is reminiscent of Virgil's portrait of the entrance to Tartarus, at *Aen.* 6.548–554: *respicit Aeneas subito et sub rupe sinistra | moenia lata videt triplici circumdata muro, | quae rapidus flammis ambit torrentibus amnis, | Tartareus Phlegethon, torquetque sonantia saxa. | porta adversa ingens solidoque adamante columnae, | vis ut nulla virum, non ipsi exscindere bello | caelicolae valeant; stat ferrea turris ad auras*.

[24] Also possibly demonstrating that in crafting the fall of Cremona Tacitus is mindful of Virgil (though to my mind not providing any significant thematic import) are *exarsere uictores* at 3.31.4 (cf. the similarly metaphorical *exarsere ignes animo* at *Aen.* 2.575, with Baxter (1971) 99–100 and Foucher (2000) 418–419); *grandaevos senes* at 3.33.1 (cf. *Aen.* 2.525 *longaevum* [*Priamum*] and 5.715 *longaevosque senes*, with Baxter (1971) 100, and Heubner (1972) ad loc.); and *gravia auro templorum dona*, also at 3.33.1 (cf. *Aen.* 3.464 *dona dehinc auro gravia* with Baxter (1971) 100; Wellesley (1972) ad loc.; Heubner (1972) ad loc.; and Horsfall (2006) on 3.464).

words that Aeneas uses of Troy at 2.624–625.[25] There the fleeing Aeneas looks back at his burning city, with the vision granted him by Venus:

> tum vero omne mihi visum considere in ignis
> Ilium et ex imo verti Neptunia Troia.
>
> Then truly all of Ilium seemed to me to settle down into flames, and Neptune's Troy to be overturned from her depths.

Aeneas's recollection of burning Troy in Book 2 is itself recalled in a passage in Book 9. At *Aeneid* 9.123–127 Turnus faces the spectacle of the Trojan ships transformed into sea nymphs by the Great Mother. Rather than being frightened by the awesome sight, he responds with enthusiasm: in the disappearance of their fleet he sees a dark omen for the Trojans, and encouragement for the Latin cause. He takes this opportunity to incite his fellow Rutulians to attack the Trojan camp. In his speech Turnus points to the Trojans' failure at Troy—a failure destined to be repeated, he maintains at 9.142–145, here in Latium:

> quibus haec medii fiducia valli
> fossarumque morae, leti discrimina parva,
> dant animos. at non viderunt moenia Troiae
> Neptuni fabricata manu considere in ignis?
>
> . . . this faith in an intervening rampart and in the delay of ditches—meager disjunctions from death—gives [the Trojans] courage. But did they not see the walls of Troy, which were built by the hand of Neptune, settle down into flames?

Turnus questions the Trojans' hopes: didn't they see what happened to the much mightier walls of Troy? After his attack on the Trojan camp, he implies, the Trojans will suffer again what they suffered at Troy, and again see the walls of Troy sink into flames (*moenia Troiae* | . . . *considere in ignis*).

Turnus' predictions are of course off the mark: his effort to topple the Trojan camp in Book 9 ultimately fails, and at the poem's conclusion he and his cause are defeated. But, despite the character Turnus' misreading of the situation, the poet Virgil, as often in the poem, uses this allusion to Book 2 to invite us to read the conflict in Latium as a reenactment of the conflict at Troy. To answer Turnus' question, yes, Aeneas (and we his audience) did see Troy collapse into flames back in Book 2. And we are seeing it all happen again in Latium. The names are changed—Turnus

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[25] As noted by Schmaus (1887) 49; Spooner (1891) ad loc.; Austin (1964) on *Aen.* 2.624; Baxter (1971) 100; and Heubner (1972) ad loc.

becomes the "Trojan" loser, as the many allusions in his speech to the speeches of Hector in the *Iliad* indicate[26]—but the destruction of proto-Romans recurs. And city walls will again sink into flames, not the walls of the Trojan camp, but the walls of Latinus' city. Indeed, in Book 12 Virgil, through a series of precise intratexts, casts the burning of Latinus' city as a reenactment of the burning of Troy.[27]

Virgil's uses of *consido* at 2.624 and 9.145 are unique in his poetry. The verb appears twelve other times in the *Aeneid*, always of people's actions.[28] He uses it either of physically sitting down (on a ship's benches, at camp, at a feast—a total of six times), or, just as often, of settling one's people.[29] The relative frequency of these other uses brings out the peculiarity of the uses in our two passages, and at the same time corroborates the close connection between the two passages. And the appearances at 2.624 and 9.145 gain greater distinction and potency when we consider that in these passages the verb comes to mean the *opposite* of settling a civilization. Here *consido* marks the fall of a civilization, first the fall of Rome's prototype Troy, and then, by implication, the repetition of that fall in Books 7–12. Here in the midst of Virgil's foundation story, the opposite of the founding of a civilization—namely, dissolution and destruction—is taking place.

Tacitus' use of *consido* at 3.33.2 is just as extraordinary as Virgil's at 2.624 and 9.145. We find *consido* twenty-one times in the extant Tacitean corpus. Four times Tacitus uses it of physically sitting down, fourteen times of settlement at a geographical location, and twice of political affairs settling down. The appearance at 3.33.2 marks the only time when he employs the verb *proprie* of things, the only time when he uses it as "to sink," and the only instance when he joins it with *in* plus the accusative.[30] What is more, the *TLL* lists just one other passage (apart from the two in the *Aeneid* and *Histories* 3.33.2) that has *considere in* with the accusative for "cities or buildings falling."[31]

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26 On which see Hardie (1994) on 9.123–175 and his subsequent notes.

27 On the parallels between Troy in Book 2 and Latinus' city in Book 12, see Putnam (1965) 151–201, esp. 172–177.

28 *Consido* also appears once in the *Georgics*, at 4.65 of bees sitting down near their favorite scents.

29 Sitting down: *Aen.* 3.289, 4.573, 5.136, 7.176, 10.5, and 11.915. Settling a people: 1.572, 3.162, 3.378, 4.349, 6.67, and 11.323.

30 Gerber and Greef (1903) 209 catalogue the 21 appearances of *consido*, and list 3.33.2 as the only use of the verb *proprie*, *de rebus*.

31 *TLL* 4.435.67 ff. The other passage is Stat. *Theb.* 3.185 (*cum regia Cadmi fulmineum in cinerem consedit*), to which Snijder (1968) ad loc. compares the two Virgilian passages.

The uniqueness of Virgil's and Tacitus' uses of *consido in ignis* confirms the latter's allusion to the former in our passage. Also linking *Aeneid* 2.624 and our passage is the application of the totalizing adjective *omnis* to the subjects of *consido* in both passages (*omne Ilium; omnia sacra profanaque*). Furthermore, the tag *hic exitus* at 3.34.1, while not uncommon in literary epitaphs,[32] is also used of Priam's, and thus Troy's, death at *Aeneid* 2.554–556: *haec finis Priami fatorum, hic exitus illum | sorte tulit Troiam incensam et prolapsa videntem | Pergama* ("This end of the fates of Priam, this death led him by chance to see Troy burned down, and Pergamum fallen").

The presence of the epitaphic phrase *hic exitus* at Troy and then Cremona may serve to link the two falls; but it is the clear-cut evocation of Virgil at 3.33.2 that most conspicuously conflates the destruction at Cremona with the destruction suffered by Virgil's proto-Romans in Book 2 and Books 7–12. As we have seen, in Virgil's wars *consido* (*in ignis*) marks the collapse of civilization—and the image is all the more effective because this sense of *consido* is so contrary to the verb's more common association with the settlement of civilization. With this pointed allusion, then, Tacitus indicates that the crumbling of civilization that Virgil established as a recurring Roman phenomenon was repeated in the civil wars of 69, here specifically at Cremona.[33]

4

To conclude our look at the nexus between Virgil's battle sites and Tacitus' Cremona, let us step back a bit, to *Histories* 3.30.1. There Tacitus prepares us for the entrance of the Flavians into Cremona itself, after they have overcome the exurban Vitellian camp in the preceding chapters. He begins his account of the new obstacles that confront the Flavians with: *ac rursus nova laborum facies* ("And, yet again, there were new forms of difficulties [in the city itself]"). The phrase *nova laborum facies* clearly refers to the physical challenges that are then listed: *ardua urbis*

[32] On which see Currie (1989), as well as Woodman (1983) on Vell. 53.3 and 72.1.

[33] Baxter (1971) 100 similarly reads Tacitus at 3.33.2 as commenting on a general phenomenon: "Tacitus deliberately avoids specifying the city as Virgil does because he wants to paint a scene of complete conflagration and to apply the phrase in a general sense to the destruction of the Roman world. The sack of Cremona, after all, is only the prelude to more significant events which follow—the burning of the Capitol and the death of Vitellius."

moenia, saxeae turres, ferrati portarum obices, "the steep walls of the city, the towers made of stone, the iron-barred gates," and then the multitude of town inhabitants and visiting fair-goers who follow in Tacitus' description. But the wording of this introductory phrase seems to be taken from the beginning of *Aeneid* 6. At 6.83–97 the Cumaean Sibyl describes to Aeneas what awaits him in Italy: *bella, horrida bella* (6.86), which she explicitly casts as new manifestations of the Trojan War.[34] Aeneas begins his response to her warnings by saying, at 6.103–105:

> non ulla laborum,
> o virgo, nova mi facies inopinave surgit.
> omnia praecepi atque animo mecum ante peregi.
>
> No new or unexpected form of difficulties confronts me, dear maiden. I have foreseen all of this, and in my mind I have gone through it all before.

So Aeneas states that the wars in Latium will be nothing new to him. He has been cautioned about, and has considered, the troubles to come. But if we consider the explicit parallels between the Trojan and Latin wars that the Sibyl has just made, then Aeneas here is also appealing to his experiences at Troy: he has endured the Trojan War, and, while the *labores* in Italy will be a great challenge to him, he has already lived through them.

The sentiment expressed at *Aeneid* 6.103–105 was memorable enough for Seneca to quote these lines in full in the peroration of a lengthy letter about living honorably and enduring hardships (*Ep.* 76.33). Tacitus has also quoted the lines, using Virgil's precise words (though, characteristically, altering the word order) when writing of the *nova laborum facies* that confronted the Flavians in Cremona. I suggest that, by pointing us to these particularly polyvalent lines in the *Aeneid*, Tacitus in yet another way bids us to read the events at Cremona as a frustrating reenactment of the wars that Virgil's proto-Romans suffered at Troy, and then again in Latium.[35]

And the opening *ac rursus* may serve to signal the Virgilian repetition.[36] At the strictly narrative level, these words indicate that the task

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[34] Replete with new versions of the characters and topography familiar from the Trojan War, as made clear at 6.88–91: *non Simois tibi nec Xanthus nec Dorica castra | defuerint; alius Latio iam partus Achilles, | natus et ipse dea; nec Teucris addita Iuno | usquam aberit.*

[35] So Baxter (1971) 99: "Tacitus' imitation of this Virgilian phrase which recalls the great struggles of the Trojans in Italy thus expands the meaning and significance of the battle for Cremona." Baxter does not, however, elaborate on this meaning and significance.

[36] On the "signposting" of allusions by Roman poets, see Hinds (1998) 1–5.

of penetrating Cremona is *yet another* new challenge for the attacking Flavians. But, if we are mindful of the Virgilian lines that lie behind the description at 3.30.1, then the words *ac rursus nova laborum facies* also tell us that these "new forms of difficulties" are not so new for Rome; indeed they are happening *again*.

CHAPTER TEN

AMICVS CAESARIS: VIBIUS CRISPUS IN THE WORKS OF JUVENAL AND TACITUS

Kathryn Williams

According to Suetonius (*Dom.* 3), Domitian used to spend hours alone in a room when he was first emperor, catching flies and stabbing them with his stylus. Someone once asked Vibius Crispus if there was anyone in the room with Domitian. Crispus reportedly replied, *ne musca quidem* ("not even a fly"). This clever retort is matched by an equally quick-witted one that Quintilian records (8.5.15) when Crispus asked a man who was alleging fear as he walked in the forum wearing a breastplate, *Quis tibi sic timere permisit?* ("Who has allowed you to be so afraid?"). Besides his sharp quips Crispus was known for his general eloquence, his charm, wealth, and old age; he was also an acknowledged informer who became an *amicus Caesaris*. Vibius Crispus was born ca. 10 and died ca. 92.[1] Quintilian, Statius, Martial, Juvenal, and Tacitus, among others, provide evidence for his career and character. Quintilian consistently presents the man in a favorable light, describing him (5.13.48) as a *vir ingenii iucundi et elegantis* ("a man of pleasant and refined nature"), with an oratorical eloquence that is "calm and pleasant, naturally delightful" (10.1.119 *compositus et iucundus et delectationi natus*; cf. 12.10.11 *iucunditatem Crispi* "the [oratorical] pleasantness of Crispus"). Statius, too, describes Crispus favorably when he mentions his *mitis prudentia* ("gentle wisdom") in a fragment from his *De Bello Germanico*, a lost epic poem in praise of Domitian.[2] We read that Crispus was the epitome of wealth when Martial (*Ep.* 4.54.7) explains to Collinus that he will not be able to avoid the fates even if *divitior Crispo* ("richer than Crispus"). In none of these references is there any blatant criticism of Vibius Crispus, although Martial's paradigmatic use of him is likely not any more complimentary than his epigram (5.32) on Crispus' lack of generosity.

[1] *PIR*[1] V 379, *RE* 8A.2 (1958) Vibius (28) 1968–1970; Rutledge (2001) 278–282.
[2] The fragment appears in the *Scholia* to Juvenal's *Satire* 4.

References to Crispus in the writings of Juvenal and Tacitus, however, paint a decidedly more threatening picture. In Juvenal, Crispus appears specifically in his capacity as an *amicus Caesaris*, a sycophantic adviser in Domitian's council; Tacitus emphasizes his role as an informer, a *delator*. Indeed, the negative personality that develops from the descriptions of Vibius Crispus in Juvenal's Fourth *Satire* and in Tacitus' *Histories* offers a striking example of the interrelationship between historiography and satire in the imperial age of Rome. Through Vibius Crispus we are able to see that the concerns of the satirist and the historian are far more alike than might be suggested by the dissimilar tones of their different genres—parodic and mock-epic in *Satire* 4, somber in Tacitus' works.[3] This should not actually surprise, however, since satire and history have other shared characteristics, among them the presence of a first-person narrator in their writings, use of *exempla*, and some measure of didacticism, whether intended or feigned. "[T]he poetry of mockery insists on its own moral, didactic agendum. Any attack on a target . . . will imply the poet's indignation at some aspect of the person or things he attacks, and a desire to 'teach' his putative audience some lesson about it."[4] For the didactic element in Tacitus' historiography, consider *Ann.* 4.33.2: *haec conquiri tradique in rem fuerit, quia pauci prudentia honesta ab deterioribus, utilia ab noxiis discernunt, plures aliorum eventis docentur* ("to investigate and record these matters will prove beneficial, because few men distinguish with practical understanding the honorable from the more reprehensible, the useful from the harmful; the majority are taught by the experiences of others").[5] *Exempla* are another feature of both genres.[6] For satire's use of *exempla*, Juvenal 10.56–345 offers an excellent

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[3] Syme (1979) 266: "Similar topics attracted both writers, and the historian was endowed with the equipment of a satirist."

[4] Rosen (2007) 218. In this work, Rosen provides a detailed study of the didactic features in Juvenal's ninth satire. See also Keane (2006) 106: "While Juvenal does not explicitly claim the role of teacher, his grand style evokes prophetic and didactic discourse." In her conclusions on the satiric genre, she adds (138): "Programmatic discussions allege that satire has several social missions, and we need an interpretive approach that treats this material as something more than misleading ornamentation."

[5] Koestermann (1965) 115: "Die Ausführungen in den Annalen sollen also dazu dienen, die Gesichtspunkte der Ehrenhaftigkeit und der Nützlichkeit . . . in das richtige Gleichgewicht zu setzen und *aliorum eventis* geeignete Lehren zu erteilen"; also Martin-Woodman (1989) 174: "historiography is didactic." Koestermann's (1971) *Annales*, Heubner's (1978) *Historiae*, Ogilvie and Richmond's (1967) *Agricola*, and Mayer's (2001) *Dialogus de Oratoribus* are used throughout, as is Clausen's (1992) text of Juvenal's *Saturae*.

[6] Chaplin (2000) 16: "When the Romans began to imitate the Greeks in writing history, two complementary traditions were united: the well-established didacticism of

illustration. Tacitus, too, provides *exempla* throughout his *corpus*, and he specifically addresses his use of them early in his *Histories*. "I begin a work rich in disasters, horrible in battles, torn by civil strife, cruel even in peace itself" (1.2.1 *Opus adgredior opimum casibus, atrox proeliis, discors seditionibus, ipsa etiam pace saevom*), writes Tacitus, and, after providing a lengthy list of examples of these topics, he adds (1.3.1), *Non tamen adeo virtutum sterile saeculum ut non et bona exempla prodiderit* ("yet not so barren of excellence was the age that it did not provide noble models as well"). Although Tacitus' *exempla* may have had different functions—commemorative, didactic, or representative of broader issues—they were clearly a fundamental aspect of his narrative.[7] Not only does *Histories* 1.2.1 claim awareness of *exempla*, it also illustrates how Tacitus at times intrudes an authorial voice (*opus adgredior*) in his writing. Historians and satirists both introduce direct authorial *personae* in their works in order to establish some type of personal relationship with their audiences. The historian typically appears in his prefaces and digressions, and Tacitus is no exception. As John Marincola has observed, "The historian's task is to narrate, but he must also win credibility for that narrative: his task is therefore also to persuade his audience that he is the proper person to tell the story and, moreover, that his account is one that should be believed."[8] Tacitus insists upon his authority by declaring his impartiality at the beginning of both the *Histories* (1.1.3 *incorruptam fidem professis neque amore quisquam et sine odio dicendus est* "those who profess inviolable truthfulness [i.e. historians] must speak without favoritism or hatred") and *Annals* (1.1.3 *sine ira et studio* "without anger and partiality").[9] Because history is generically factual, the historian's *persona* harmonizes in large part with the public figure who has actually written

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historiography and the equally deep-rooted role of *exempla* at Rome." Chaplin's work focuses upon Livy, yet she does observe about Tacitus' history (29 n. 112), "Although he undoubtedly regarded history as offering models of conduct ..., he is more inclined to label *exempla* as he goes along than to show people actively imitating or avoiding past actions." For Tacitus' use of *exempla*, see Woodman (1995) 115: "Tacitus himself repeats that historiography has an exemplary function (4.33.2)"; Damon (2004) 11. Cf. Livy (*praef.* 10) on the benefits of history's *exempla*. For *exempla* in satire, see Braund (1996a) 19–20; Courtney (1980) 38–40.

[7] A comprehensive study of Tacitus' *exempla*, as Chaplin produced for Livy, would help to clarify their various functions in Tacitus' writings.

[8] Marincola (1997) 128.

[9] Cf. Livy, who aims in his writing of early Rome to be "free from concerns which could make the historian anxious, although not bend him from the truth" (*praef.* 5 *omnis expers curae quae scribentis animum, etsi non flectere a vero, sollicitum tamen efficere posset*).

the work. "Roman readers would have been exhibiting naivety about the rules of the genre if they imagined 'Tacitus' as something largely insulated from Tacitus. Identity of the two may be no less a fiction than total difference, but it was a fiction that Tacitus' readers will have accepted as a matter of course as the terms of their reading."[10] The fictional premise of satire permits the satirist to shape a more imaginative *persona*, and sometimes more than one.[11] Ultimately, however, the satirist's *persona* must also convince his audience of his authority to speak. "Whatever sort of satirist he creates—angry, mocking, or smiling—he invests himself with an authority which makes it hard to challenge his picture as unrealistic ... His authority—and hence his implicit truthfulness—derives from the superior status he assumes."[12] One way he does this is by emphasizing his experience. The satirist has either endured the situations he tells of or endured something sufficiently similar to make him a voice of authority.[13] Juvenal initiates the development of his satirical *persona* immediately in *Satire* 1.1–2: *Semper ego auditor tantum? numquamne reponam* | *vexatus totiens rauci Theseide Cordi?* ("Am I always only to be in the audience? Shall I never respond, harassed so often by the *Theseid* of hoarse Cordus?"). It is the satirist who has suffered through myriad uninspiring recitations; the satirist has also "slipped his hand from the rod and given advice to Sulla" (1.15–16 *et nos ergo manum ferulae subduximus, et nos* | *consilium dedimus Sullae*). The crucial link between the *personae* of satire and history is that as first-person narrators they need to exhibit indisputable freedom of expression.[14] For both genres, the authority of

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[10] Sailor (2008) 7.

[11] Keane (2006) *passim*; Plaza (2006) 235–256.

[12] Braund (1996b) 44.

[13] For discussions of the satirist as a figure of authority and his relationship with his audience, see Braund (1996b) 42–59.

[14] For the satirists' insistence upon freedom of speech, see Horace, *Sat.* 2.1.83–87, Persius 1.110–123, and Juvenal 1.160–170 along with Braund's discussion (2004, esp. 419–421). Tacitus declares the historian's need for free speech through the words of Cremutius Cordus, which Marincola (1997) 251–252 describes as "a ringing defence of the historian's *libertas* ... The line of predecessors in which Cremutius places himself can be seen as Tacitus' own attempt to be seen, via this character, as the continuator of that same line." McHugh (2004) 392 also observes, "*Annals* 4.32–35 fulfills Tacitus' explicit and implicit historiographical aims, that is, first to provide guidance, through the examples of the lives of others, on how one may survive with integrity, even under the reign of a bad emperor; and secondly to illustrate, by his own use of figured speech, that the historian can still communicate the lessons of history under tyranny, that critical and meaningful speech is possible even when the modes of expression are severely restricted."

the *persona* derives from its independence. Consequently, these voices must be concerned with potential censorship; the issue of free speech is vital to their work. Both Tacitus and Juvenal employ Vibius Crispus to exemplify the corrupt and tense relations between Roman emperors and their subordinates, and in their similar concentration on him as a man who had the ear of the emperor, yet compromised on the truth, he becomes the *exemplum* of the limitations on speech that such men and the emperor imposed on Roman citizens.[15]

Let us consider Crispus' role in Juvenal's satire first. Recall that the ostensible issue of the fourth satire is the extraordinarily large *rhombus* that has been given to Domitian and the ensuing matter of what he should do with it. In need of advice, Domitian summons his council to Alba.[16] Juvenal immediately establishes the environment of fear by noting Domitian's hatred of these advisers "on whose faces the pallor of friendship, grievous and great, rested" (4.73–75 *quos oderat ille, | in quorum facie miserae magnaeque sedebat | pallor amicitiae*). Then the satirist begins his epic-imitating catalog of attendees. First comes Pegasus (77), who appears as the *vilicus urbi* ("slave overseer for the city"). Second on the list is Vibius Crispus or—as Juvenal writes—*Crispi iucunda senectus* (81). Here is the satirist's entire characterization of Crispus (4.81–93):[17]

> venit et Crispi iucunda senectus,
> cuius erant mores qualis facundia, mite
> ingenium. maria ac terras populosque regenti
> quis comes utilior, si clade et peste sub illa
> saevitiam damnare et honestum adferre liceret
> consilium? sed quid violentius aure tyranni,
> cum quo de pluviis aut aestibus aut nimboso
> vere locuturi fatum pendebat amici?
> ille igitur numquam derexit bracchia contra
> torrentem, nec civis erat qui libera posset
> verba animi proferre et vitam inpendere vero.

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[15] Bartsch (1994) 123 recognized that Tacitus' Crispus and Eprius Marcellus were "representative not only of the informers as a group, of their immunity to senatorial attack, and of the dangers of free speech under any regime in which the emperor grants them hearing, but also of the unhappy phenomenon of their continuing influence from the reign of one hated emperor to that of his supposedly reformist successor."

[16] See Crook (1955) 49 about Domitian's *consilium* and Winkler (1995) 60–63 on the significance of the setting in Alba. Tacitus also links Domitian disapprovingly with Alba (*Agr.* 45.1).

[17] On *aula*: Winterling (1999) 195–203. On Vibius as an *amicus Caesaris*, see 183–186.

sic multas hiemes atque octogensima vidit
solstitia, his armis illa quoque tutus in aula.

And (next) came the pleasant old age of Crispus, whose character was like his eloquence, a gentle nature. To one ruling the seas and lands and nations, who would have been a more useful adviser if he had been permitted to condemn the cruelty and offer honorable advice under that destructive plague? But what could be more violent than the ear of a tyrant on whom depended the fate of a friend ready to chat about the rain or heat or showery spring? Therefore that man (Crispus) never stretched his arms against the torrent, nor was he the sort of citizen to speak his mind freely and risk his life for the truth. That is how he saw many winters and eighty summers, safe with these defenses, even in that royal hall.

Juvenal's use of the adjectives *iucunda* and *mite* and his attention to eloquence in the first lines might at first glance suggest that his view of Crispus is much like that of Quintilian and Statius. In fact, a number of scholars suggest that the satirist's characterization of him, on the whole, is not disapproving.[18] Yet Juvenal emphasizes neither Quintilian's *vir ingenii iucundi* nor the *mitis prudentia* of Statius' Crispus, but rather *Crispi iucunda senectus* and *mite ingenium*. The scholiast to this satire acknowledges Juvenal's parody of Statius' *De Bello Germanico*[19] and the fragment does indeed show remarkable similarities to Juvenal's satire:

Nestorei mitis prudentia Crispi
et Fabius Veiento—potentem signat utrumque
purpura, ter memores implerunt nomine fastos—
et prope Caesareae confinis Acilius aulae

the gentle wisdom of Nestor-like Crispus, and Fabius Veiento—the purple marks the power of both, three times have they filled the memory-preserving consular lists with their names—and Acilius, a near neighbor of Caesar's royal hall.

[18] E.g. Ferguson (1979) 166, Courtney (1980) 217, Chilver (1979) 173–174, Winkler (1995) 74. Griffith (1969) 140 concludes: "Crispus, as Pegasus the jurist a few lines earlier, is treated not unkindly by Juvenal." Yet Griffith's earlier statement seems to contradict (134): "eleven character-sketches of these men, even the shortest damning in its very conciseness." Cf. Ramage (1989) 694: Crispus and Pegasus are "described in such a way that together they represent the most distasteful elements of Domitian's reign … [They] illustrate the lack of freedom of the times and the disregard for honesty, truth, and justice that characterized this slavery."

[19] The scholiast does not actually mention Statius, only an epic poem about Domitian's German war, but scholars today believe the reference is to Statius' lost work. See Connors (2005) 142–143. On Juvenal's parody see Townend (1973) 153–154; Griffith (1969) 137–143; Jones (1990), esp. 57–58.

Juvenal clearly imitates but also challenges Statius' characterization of Crispus: for Juvenal, Crispus is Nestor-like in old age (*Crispi . . . senectus*) rather than wisdom (cf. Statius: *prudentia Crispi*), and although Crispus does have a *mite ingenium*, his *prudentia* will be transferred to Veiento, who is allied far too closely with "deadly Catullus" (113 *cum mortifero prudens Veiento Catullo*) to maintain the dignity of a three-time consul.[20] Juvenal briefly observes the old age Acilius shares with Crispus (94 *eiusdem Acilius aevi*) before describing Acilius' son—consul in 91 with Trajan—as a young man who undeservedly suffered exile and death on orders of the emperor after being forced to fight beasts in the arena (95–101). Both poems note the *aula* of Caesar, but in Juvenal's account it becomes a place where even *amici* must bear arms. It is no surprise that Juvenal does not record Crispus' three consulships, noteworthy though they would have been. His satire rather distorts the grandeur of Statius' epic in order to relish the servility of the advisers under a cruel tyrant.

Worthy of particular note is the mock-epic tone of *Crispi iucunda senectus*. This phrase, as striking as it is unexpected, should alert the reader to Juvenal's special emphasis on the old age of Crispus. Any doubt of this will be erased by the conclusion of the characterization with its even more precise reference to Crispus' old age (*sic multas hiemes atque octogensima vidit* | *solstitia*). Explanation for this interest in Crispus' age is blunt: *his armis illa quoque tutus in aula*. Juvenal envisions a constant battle in the imperial palace,[21] but the *arma* of Crispus are not actual weapons at all: only a servile *mite ingenium* that never challenges the emperor (*ille igitur numquam derexit bracchia contra* | *torrentem*) and forsakes the role of a true citizen by never speaking freely or truthfully (*nec civis erat qui libera posset* | *verba animi proferre et vitam*

[20] Griffith (1969) 139–140: "Both [Juvenal and Statius] agree in applying to him the adjective *mitis* (*mite ingenium*, Juvenal, 82; *mitis prudentia*, Statius). But whereas Statius surely meant *prudentia* in a complimentary sense, Juvenal reserves that concept for Veiento (113) and while crediting him with *iucunditas* (81; the elevated tone of the periphrasis *Crispi iucunda senectus* will not pass unnoticed) and *facundia*, with conduct to match (82), manages with one rapier-thrust to pierce straight to the latent weakness in his character: Crispus was a yes-man." In conclusion he adds (142): "[T]he parody [is] deft, deliberate and, to a percipient reader, almost as damaging to Statius and to his Imperial patron as it is to its named victims."

[21] In his study of the war imagery in Juvenal's account of Domitian's council, Anderson (1982) 240 notes: "Juvenal characterizes the servile manners of Crispus as a means of defense against ruin (*his armis*), for, at the court of the tyrant, military values have been so degraded that they can function as a symbol for flattery. On another level, though, they describe accurately the rule of Domitian, as Juvenal interprets its effect upon Rome."

inpendere vero). "Who would have been a more useful adviser (*comes*) than Crispus," asks Juvenal, "if he had been permitted to condemn the cruelty and offer honorable advice under that destructive plague?" The lost opportunity for providing sound advice (*quis utilior?*) highlights the fundamental problem of empire: it is impossible to give frank advice to one who reigns over the seas, the lands, and the people (*maria ac terras populosque regenti*), since that ruler can at any moment become the tyrant. Even speaking about the weather can be dangerous (*quid violentius aure tyranni, | cum quo de pluviis aut aestibus aut nimboso | vere locuturi fatum pendebat amici?*). The *amicus* must fear the *tyrannus*. The *comes* cannot be the *civis*. Men such as Vibius Crispus, with their easy character and eloquence and potentially good advice to offer, but who blatantly cower and compromise, who don't speak frankly or truthfully, are the only ones who survive. Hence, *Crispi iucunda senectus* (and *eiusdem Acilius aevi*).

In his satire, Juvenal condemns Crispus for the safe speech he employs to maintain complicity with his emperor. Tacitus condemns Crispus for the destructive speech against others he has employed in order to achieve and maintain complicity with his emperor. Tacitus' Crispus is a *delator*, an informer and prosecutor, and the historian's descriptions and analyses of the actions and significance of *delatores* in imperial administrations are presented without apparent hesitation and little ambivalence. The *locus classicus* occurs at *Annals* 1.74.1–2 where he describes in detail the beginning of a new way of advancement and new cause of fear because of the legal actions of Caepio Crispinus, "the 'Founding Father' as it were"[22] of the *delatores*, during the reign of Tiberius. The description permits little latitude for Tacitus' readers in interpreting *delatores* throughout the historian's writings:

> Not much later Granius Marcellus, praetor of Bithynia, was accused of treason by his own quaestor, Caepio Crispinus, with Romanius Hispo supporting the charge. Thus did he initiate a mode of life which afterward the woes of the period and the temerity of men made all too familiar; for needy, unknown, and restless, as he crept into the cruelty of the *princeps* with clandestine accusations and soon created danger for all the most noble—winning power from one man, from everyone else hatred—, he provided a model which allowed its followers to exchange poverty for wealth, contempt for the power to instill dread, devising ruin for others and indeed ultimately for themselves.[23]

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[22] Rutledge (2001) 90.

[23] *Ann.* 1.74.1–2 *Nec multo post Granium Marcellum praetorem Bithyniae quaestor*

Here we see Crispinus as a man without respectable economic or social standing, a man of no restraint, a man who catered to Tiberius' cruel whims by informing on the Roman elite. Such actions led to his wealth and created fear among the nobles, and, as Tacitus records elsewhere, the informers' rewards—both Crispinus' and those of later *delatores*—"were no less hated than their crimes, since some, gaining priesthoods and consulships as spoils, others, imperial administrative offices and secret influence with the emperor, were stirring up and upsetting everything through hatred and terror" (*Hist.* 1.2.3).[24] For Tacitus, *delatores* were men who poisoned the political environment of imperial Rome by bringing charges against fellow Romans in hopes of gaining the favor of the emperor. Because they lurked everywhere, these *delatores* intensified the loss of freedom in speech and action under the *principes*. No place or person was immune from the threat of these men; the atmosphere of fear was constant, especially among members of the nobility.[25] Tacitus was not alone in such characterization. Also in the writings of Pliny the Younger, Quintilian, Suetonius, Martial, and Juvenal,[26] the *delator* appeared as a one-dimensional figure of initially marginal social and political status, with unseemly and avaricious ambition, contributing to the declining moral and ethical code as he zealously sought and gained political authority through collusion with the emperor. Regardless of the historical validity of the characterization, it is critical to understand the *delator* for these writers as a rhetorical construct, one of the "encoded terms understood to include a certain recognizable type of behavior or individual."[27] Their

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ipsius Caepio Crispinus maiestatis postulavit subscribente Romano Hispone; qui [presumably this refers to Crispinus, although Hispo cannot be ruled out by the Latin] *formam vitae iniit quam postea celebrem miseriae temporum et audaciae hominum fecerunt. nam egens ignotus inquies, dum occultis libellis saevitiae principis adrepit, mox clarissimo cuique periculum facessit, potentiam apud unum, odium apud omnis adeptus dedit exemplum quod secuti ex pauperibus divites, ex contemptis metuendi perniciem aliis ac postremum sibi invenere.*

[24] *Hist.* 1.2.3 *nec minus praemia delatorum invisa quam scelera, cum alii sacerdotia et consulatus ut spolia adepti, procurationes alii et interiorem potentiam, agerent verterent cuncta odio et terrore*. Tacitus continues, *corrupti in dominos servi, in patronos liberti; et quibus deerat inimicus, per amicos oppressi* ("Slaves were corrupted against their masters, freedmen against their patrons; and those for whom an enemy was lacking were crushed by their friends").

[25] Sinclair (1995) 13: "[T]he whole subject of informers and delation allows Tacitus to hint at the uncomfortable fact that a *princeps* could use the patronage system so dear to the nobility to control and harm their class."

[26] Rutledge (2001) 18. For the specific citations for all these authors, see 322 n. 14.

[27] Rutledge (2001) 10–11. Rutledge's thorough study of the function of *delatores* in the republic and empire challenges this negative view offered by these ancient authors

apparent close relationship with the emperor prompted Tacitus and Juvenal to extend the use of the term from a primary *exemplum* of behavior to be avoided or commemorated to one of corruption and abuse of imperial power.

In the *Dialogus*, Tacitus' Aper extols Crispus and Eprius Marcellus, who won wealth, fame, and influence with the emperor Vespasian for their oratorical brilliance, as fine examples of men *in Caesaris amicitia* (8.3).[28] Yet Maternus, in response, defines these *amici Caesaris* much as Juvenal does: men oozing fear and servility. Just as Juvenal introduces Domitian's council as men whose faces bore the pallor of the emperor's friendship (4.75 *pallor amicitiae*), so, too, does Maternus highlight their fear (13.4): "For that Crispus of yours and Marcellus, whom you offer to me as examples, what is there in their lot to be coveted: that they fear, or are feared?" (*nam Crispus iste et Marcellus, ad quorum exempla me vocas, quid habent in hac sua fortuna concupiscendum: quod timent, an quod timentur?*). The servility of Juvenal's Crispus (4.89–90 *numquam derexit bracchia contra | torrentem*) is likewise matched by Maternus when he adds that Crispus and Marcellus "never seem sufficiently servile to those who rule, or sufficiently free to us" (*nec imperantibus umquam satis servi videntur nec nobis satis liberi*). The Crispus of Tacitus' Maternus and of Juvenal's satire is a sycophant who grovels slavishly before the emperor—and even then he is afraid.

Tacitus maintains Maternus' view of Crispus in two passages of his *Histories*, at 2.10 and 4.41–43. At 2.10, the historian criticizes the *delator* Crispus, who, owing to his wealth, power, and clever nature, was a famous man more than an honorable one (2.10.1 *pecunia potentia ingenio inter claros magis quam inter bonos*).[29] The historian relates how Crispus brought charges against another informer, Annius Faustus. He managed to have him condemned, but only with difficulty, since the senate, according to Tacitus, despised Crispus, too, on account of his own malicious actions. Tacitus claims, "men remembered that Crispus himself had engaged in the same profession for profit, and not the penalty but

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and concludes, "Contrary to the presentation of our sources, the *delator* is generally neither a criminal element nor a force for destruction, but one that maintains stability through law enforcement and service to the princeps" (19). This "service to the princeps" undoubtedly influenced the characterizations in the ancient sources. Modern perceptions of "the lobbyist" might serve as a parallel.

[28] See Levene (1999) 214; Luce (1993) 29.

[29] Plass (1988) 53: "*Magis quam* can also muffle a potential compliment through invidious comparison."

the prosecutor was offensive" (2.10.3 *ipsum Crispum easdem accusationes cum praemio exercuisse meminerant, nec poena criminis, sed ultor displicebat*). Tacitus continues his characterization of Crispus as a harmful *delator* when he has Montanus (4.41–43) speak out against the senate's loss of its will and its ability to speak frankly because of men such as Crispus and his younger counterpart, Regulus: Crispus served as one of the villainous examples for the older generation, argues Montanus, just as Regulus will serve the younger, if the senate decides not to condemn the informer for his involvement in the murder of Piso. Even the occasional attempt at confrontation ended ultimately in submission. For example, the day after Helvidius spoke out boldly against Eprius' activities as an informer and thereby drove him and Crispus temporarily from the senate,[30] the "senators, after they faced opposition, abandoned the freedom they had ventured upon" (4.44.1 *patres coeptatam libertatem, postquam obviam itum, omisere*). Here we see the immediate and detrimental effects that Regulus, Eprius, and Crispus had on the senators' ability to voice opposition and challenge the emperor and his minions. Clearly, for Tacitus, Crispus provided an excellent illustration of how informers operated in the imperial administration, the personal gains they reaped from their activities, and the devastating consequences they had on the senate and the freedom of speech that senators had once enjoyed during the republic. Juvenal draws a similar picture of the *delator*—and does so from the start of his *Satires*. Just thirty lines into *Satire* 1, the satirist mentions an informer, a *delator*, who inspires fear (*timet, trepido*), who has already betrayed his powerful friend and "will soon snatch from the eaten-away nobility whatever remains" (1.33–35 *magni delator amici | et cito rapturus de nobilitate comesa | quod superest*). In fact, informers seemed to be everywhere, as *Satire* 4.45–48 indicates: the fisherman who caught this large fish (*hoc monstrum*) could take it only to the "chief priest" (*pontifici summo*, i.e. emperor),[31] for, as Juvenal explains, "Who would dare to offer for sale such a thing or buy it when even the shores were filled with many

[30] Note that all informers were not alike. Here, on their departure from the senate, both Eprius and Crispus "were angry, but their demeanors were different, Marcellus casting his eyes about in a threatening manner, Crispus smiling" (4.43.2 *ambo infensi, voltu diuerso, Marcellus minacibus oculis, Crispus renidens*). Crispus was a survivor. Tacitus acknowledges Crispus' agreeable temperament, although he places it within a pejorative context.

[31] Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 3.58.3, the only other occurrences of this peculiar phrase for the emperor.

an informer?"[32] Informers make up a large portion of Domitian's council as well:[33] for example, there is not only Vibius Crispus, but also Pompeius, who slit throats with a faint whisper (4.110 *Pompeius tenui iugulos aperire susurro*), and deadly Catullus, whom Juvenal says would be considered a great and obvious monster even in his own day (4.115 *grande et conspicuum nostro quoque tempore monstrum*). Consequently, there is absolutely no principled and frank speech among these *amici Caesaris*.

Scholars[34] have duly noted cross-references to Crispus in Tacitus and Juvenal, but they have not discussed Crispus' exemplary status in the two authors. The similarly negative portraits of the *delator* and *amicus Caesaris* serve as a rhetorical foundation upon which both authors scrutinize contemporary political issues, most notably freedom of speech in imperial Rome and the relationship between emperors and advisers. Juvenal's account of the *consilium principis* highlights major tension between Domitian and his advisers in an environment of fear, sycophancy, and disingenuousness. The advisers appear before Domitian in a state of high anxiety. Servile fear confronts imperial hatred. The trivial issue under discussion holds potentially dire consequences for any man who does not express the expected adulation. Not one of the advisers says anything in the council session constructive or honorable; there is only obsequious flattery. All are dismissed in a servile manner at the end of this monstrous, frivolous affair. Juvenal concludes his satire by expressing a wish that Domitian had focused all of his attention on such trifles rather than removing "the brilliant and illustrious minds from the city without punishment and with no avenger" (4.151–152 *claras … abstulit urbi | inlustresque animas inpune et vindice nullo*).[35] Tacitus' *Histories* deals with this conflict between emperor and leading men in the same way. Indeed, "the proper relationship between senators and *princeps* (is) one of the great themes in Tacitus' major works."[36] Montanus understands the relationship of the senators to the emperor as one of subservience, and he

[32] *Sat.* 4.45–48: *destinat hoc monstrum cumbae linique magister | pontifici summo. quis enim proponere talem | aut emere auderet, cum plena et litora multo | delatore forent?*

[33] It is noteworthy that Juvenal never refers specifically to these advisers in Domitian's council as *delatores*. By not making the precise reference here, Juvenal manages to move the issue of free speech beyond the influence of *delatores* in Domitian's time to the comparable issue in his own time, when the role of the *delator* per se was less a viable rhetorical culprit, but the problem of free expression still remained.

[34] E.g. Chilver (1979) 173–174, Ash (2007) 102–103; Ferguson (1979) 166, Courtney (1980) 217, Braund (1996a) 254.

[35] Cf. Ov. *Met.* 1.89–90, where he describes the golden age as being *vindice nullo*.

[36] Keitel (1993) 42.

argues for change whenever the opportunity arises. If the senate is unwilling to punish the *delator*, he says, "We have lost our vigor, senators; no longer are we that senate, which, when Nero was killed, demanded that his informers and lackeys be punished according to tradition."[37] The two authors, writing in decidedly different genres, are addressing exactly the same issue through the same *exemplum*, and so, in the case of Vibius Crispus, we see a close affinity between historiography and satire in a way that we do not with the handling of Crispus in, say, Statius' epic or Quintilian's treatise on oratory.[38] The relationship between emperor and nobility leads naturally for Tacitus and Juvenal into the broader issue of speech. This issue was central to both writers and both genres, since the need to speak freely and frankly—at least to some imagined audience—was critical to Roman historiography and Roman satire.

Tacitus' treatment of the issue of the limitations on speech actually begins with his earliest work, and it is worth looking at the passage not only to see what he says about the broader significance of limited speech, but also to see how he himself demonstrates how to speak honestly and truthfully, even though he too is living within the imperial system. In *Agricola* 2, we learn that Arulenus Rusticus and Herennius Senecio, by offering praise of Thrasea Paetus and Helvidius Priscus, lost their lives; their books (2.1 *monumenta clarissimorum ingeniorum*) were burned. Such censorship, says Tacitus, was aimed at the destruction of the "voice of the Roman people and the liberty of the senate and the moral conscience of humankind" (2.2 *vocem populi Romani et libertatem senatus et conscientiam generis humani*).[39] Immediately after condemning earlier suppression of speech Tacitus shifts to the present. Circumstances have changed (3.1): Nerva has united the concepts of *principatus* and *libertas*, and Trajan is strengthening the "happiness of the times" (*felicitas temporum*) and "public confidence" (*securitas publica*). Tacitus

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[37] *Hist.* 4.42.6 *elanguimus, patres conscripti, nec iam ille senatus sumus, qui occiso Nerone delatores et ministros more maiorum puniendos flagitabat*. Sage (1990) 923: Montanus' speech "is really a general disquisition on what the relations of the Senate to a new emperor should be."

[38] Marache (1989) 604: "Nous le verrons plus loin, Juvénal a sur l'histoire et sur le problème politique des idées analogues à celles de Tacite." Compare Crispus in the works also of Martial and Suetonius mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

[39] Juvenal's *Satire* 4 illustrates the same three ill effects of the loss of free speech as stated here by Tacitus. In his satire, the poor fisherman cannot speak the truth (*vox populi Romani*), the advisers can only fawn in servitude to their emperor (*libertas senatus*), and by the end of Domitian's reign, cruel savagery went unchecked and thus the famous and distinguished minds were destroyed without punishment (*conscientia generis humani*).

criticizes the past through detailed examples and states that much better times are here now. When he mentions at the beginning of his *Histories* (1.1.4) his hope later to write about his own age under Nerva and Trajan, "times of rare happiness when it is permitted to think what you wish and to express what you think" (*rara temporum felicitate, ubi sentire quae velis et quae sentias dicere licet*), this again sounds like unequivocal praise of the post-Domitianic rulers. Yet we know that Tacitus never did write a work explicitly about his own times, one indication among many, according to Frederick Ahl, that "the literary climate was actually deteriorating under Trajan and Hadrian."[40] In condemning activities of past emperors and offering a nod of praise to the present ones, Tacitus cannot be faulted for criticizing the state, but, at the same time, we should not view his claim as indisputably complimentary.[41] Rather, Tacitus may be employing 'emphasis' or 'doublespeak' (writing in such a way as to be understood differently by different audiences), a rhetorical technique that is used, as Shadi Bartsch has explained, "to make the question of intent slippery enough to be safe."[42] One uses emphasis to write openly (*aperte*) when one cannot write frankly (*palam*). What Tacitus does say about writing in his own time, in fact, makes this possibility of 'emphasis' even more likely. Embedded in his *Annals* (4.32.1–2), immediately preceding his famous description of the trial of Cremutius Cordus, Tacitus contrasts the writing of past historians with his own. Not only were their subjects—wars, political conflict, legal debates—more memorable, they were also able to recount those subjects with "free scope" (*libero egressu*),[43] while the present historian's effort is *in arto* ("constrained").

[40] Ahl (1984b) 80; see also Ramage (1989) 706.

[41] Ramage (1989) has argued that Juvenal, Tacitus, Pliny, and Martial were actually promoting Trajanic propaganda through *damnatio memoriae*. Green (1998) xlii–xliii, following Ramage's lead, goes so far as to suggest that Juvenal himself was a veritable Crispus. Against this notion of composing Trajanic propaganda by criticizing Domitian's reign, see Wilson (2003d), esp. 525–533.

[42] Bartsch (1994) 125. The notion was familiar to the Romans. In his treatise on oratory, Quintilian discussed the importance of the rhetorical figure, 'Emphasis', which he defined as "when from something said, something else lying hidden is drawn, … something lying hidden and as if demanding to be discovered by the listener" (*Inst.* 9.2.64–66 *emphasis … cum ex aliquo dicto latens aliquid eruitur … aliud latens et auditori quasi inveniendum … Eius triplex usus est: unus si dicere palam parum tutum est*). A speaker or writer uses emphasis, he adds, when "it is not sufficiently safe to speak frankly." For discussions of Quintilian's "Emphasis" and Juvenal's *Satire* 4, see Winkler (1995), esp. 65–70, and Ahl (1984b) 81–84. Ahl (1984a) offers a broad study of Emphasis and its relevance to imperial writing.

[43] Cf. Juv. 1.162–167. Martin and Woodman (1989) limit the meaning of *libero egressu*

The contrast with his own time at the very least hints that there were limitations on his ability to "to say what he thinks." Nonetheless, to make sure that he can defend himself against any accusations on his loyalty to the emperors, he adds (4.33.4), *reperies qui ob similitudinem morum aliena malefacta sibi obiectari putent* ("you will find those who, because of their similar character, think the crimes of others are cast at them").[44] Anyone who suspects that Tacitus is criticizing current limitations on speech must have a guilty conscience: Tacitus is writing about the past—or so he claims.

We can observe in Juvenal's *Satires* a similar technique. In *Satire* 1, Juvenal makes clear that he is driven to write satire from *indignatio* at the vices all around him. The tone of this programmatic satire is one of bitterness towards corrupt conditions in Rome and admiration of Lucilius for his boldness in attacking by name those ne'er-do-wells around him. Yet, when challenged on the danger of writing satire about his contemporaries by his interlocutor at the end of the satire, Juvenal seems to back away by stating that he will write only about the dead (1.170–171). To be sure, Juvenal is following in the footsteps of Horace and Persius, but this final statement also serves the important function of providing cover for the satirist.[45] Against anyone who might accuse him of libel or treason Juvenal could point to this statement to defend himself. If individuals saw themselves in Juvenal's characterizations, well, it was not because of any intended attack on his part. The satirist is not turning away from his own times as he ends his first satire or when he writes about the past in his satires;[46] in fact, he is actually stating one of the big problems about his own time—the emperor's control over speech—but

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to the "unrestricted elaboration" of the immediate subjects, but still recognize that the phrase "anticipates the theme of free speech at 33.4." Sailor's comments (2008) 126–127 on Tacitus' use of *libertas* are apt: "[W]henever *libertas* is used to characterize Roman history before Augustus, it brings with it a broader range of meaning ... In Tacitus' formulation, the 'candor' of the historians of the Republic is suspiciously coterminous with the 'freedom' of the state." For Tacitus' broader definition of *libertas*, see Morford (1991).

44 Martin and Woodman (1989) 175: "Readers were evidently alive to hidden meanings, innuendo or—to use the technical term—*emphasis*."

45 Hor. *Sat.* 2.1.57–86; Pers. 1.107–134. See Braund (2004) 421: "while all of them [Horace, Persius, Juvenal] pretend to tackle the dangers involved in the exercise of free speech, they all contrive ingenious evasions with which their satiric *personae* (and, perhaps, by extension, they themselves) can avoid the charge of being a menace to society."

46 Woodman (1997) 93: "it is not to be doubted that behind Juvenal's victims lurk contemporary personalities"; Braund (2004) 421; Syme (1979) 256.

the reader must recognize his method for commenting on this potent current issue. The Roman listener, well trained in rhetorical technique, would be able to appreciate the "emphasis" and the reason for it, and appreciate that Juvenal's condemnation of Domitian and men such as Vibius Crispus actually served as a cover for criticism of the present. As Kirk Freudenburg has noted: "Satire is a genre that must engage with the present."[47] If the satirist is going to speak truthfully under any emperor, he needs to speak cleverly. So too the historian.

Juvenal clearly indicates interest in his own time in his programmatic first satire (1.147–149): *nil erit ulterius quod nostris moribus addat* | *posteritas, …* | *omne in praecipiti vitium stetit* ("There is nothing worse that posterity may add to our ways … every vice has reached its peak"). He is always cognizant of the flaws of his time, and not just social and moral flaws, but political ones as well.[48] We have seen that Tacitus, too, notes his awareness of the influence of writing about past events on the present at *Annals* 4.33.4.[49] Both writers are concerned with the world in which they live—a world under an emperor—and the concomitant apprehension that such a world invites. The *delator*, whom both writers claim lurked everywhere in order to ferret out dissension against the ruler and gain his support, and men like him, represented the only acceptable speech under the imperial system; and, for both writers, such speech was unacceptable. Historian and satirist show us that under Domitian his advisers dared not speak frankly. Both men emphasize that those who were allowed to speak were either flatterers or informers, or both. Those who spoke too forthrightly suffered; those who agreed to say only what the emperor wanted to hear, flourished.[50] Crispus was certainly one of the most successful *delatores*. Both Juvenal and Tacitus, although writing in distinct genres, used him to exemplify the phenomenon of the

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[47] Freudenburg (2001) 237. Courtney (1980) 32: "For though he takes his *exempla* from the dead, the vices incorporated in them and attacked by him are clearly represented as still prevalent while he is writing."

[48] Hutchinson (1993) 182 remarked about *Satire* 4, "Juvenal's own narrative … portrays not just a ludicrous incident but a political world, and especially (what mattered most to Roman historiography) the relations of the emperor to the great." Cf. Flintoff (1990) 124, who in striving to unite the two seemingly disparate sections of the satire, sees only "amusing peccadilloes" in Juvenal's description of the fish of Crispinus and Domitian.

[49] See Moles (1998) § 2.1, who analyzes this passage's "intense contemporary relevance."

[50] Mellor (1993) 130: "The deepest irony, which underlies the width and the structure of all Tacitus' historical writing, is a moral one: the traditional Roman virtues are no longer desirable for those who wish to survive and succeed."

deleterious imbalance between an emperor and his subjects, especially in terms of free speech. The *exemplum* derived from an earlier time, but it had clear relevance for the historiography and satire of their day—and it allowed both writers a means to address their concerns with the present, yet discredit anyone who questioned their intentions. This last element was necessary, for, as Michael Coffey has rightly noted, "[T]here was still a fear that even a liberal emperor might one day turn tyrant and encourage once more these hated instruments of oppression."[51] Or, in the words of Tacitean Montanus as he speaks to the senate (*Hist.* 4.42.5): *an Neronem extremum dominorum putatis?*[52]

[51] Coffey (1976) 136; see also Sweet (1979) 296–297.

[52] I thank the conference attendees for their many thoughtful and beneficial comments, and Tom Banchich, Neil Coffee, John Dugan, and Dave Mankin for their helpful advice on early drafts of this chapter.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE UNFORTUNATE MARRIAGE OF GAIUS SILIUS: TACITUS AND JUVENAL ON THE FALL OF MESSALINA

Christopher Nappa

In the year 48, the emperor Claudius received some shocking news. His wife Messalina had surpassed all her former adulteries by publicly marrying Gaius Silius while Claudius was away at Ostia; by doing so, she also publicly announced her intent to divorce the emperor. Moreover, she had already transferred property from the imperial house to the residence of her lover, and Claudius' slaves and freedmen were sometimes seen there too. This is, at least, the story as passed down.[1] Tacitus admits that it strains credibility, in part because the principals should have known that there are no secrets in Rome (*Ann.* 11.27):[2]

> haud sum ignarus fabulosum visum iri tantum ullis mortalium securitatis fuisse in civitate omnium gnara et nihil reticente, nedum consulem designatum cum uxore principis praedicta die, adhibitis qui obsignarent, velut suscipiendorum liberorum causa convenisse, atque illam audisse auspicum verba, subisse ⟨flammeum⟩, sacrificasse apud deos; discubitum inter convivas, oscula complexus, noctem denique actam licentia coniugali. sed nihil compositum miraculi causa, verum audita scriptaque senioribus trado.

> I am scarcely unaware that it is going to seem fantastic, in a city that is aware of everything and that keeps nothing silent, that any human beings had such a sense of safety—not even to speak of the fact that the consul designate married the emperor's wife on an appointed date, when people had been invited to act as witnesses, as if to produce legitimate children; and that she had listened to the words of the officiants, put on the wedding veil, sacrificed in the presence of the gods; and that they'd had dinners with guests, kisses and embraces, and finally a night spent in the license afforded a married couple. Yet I pass on nothing concocted because it is hard to believe, but things that have been heard from, and written down by, older generations.

[1] For comparison and discussion of the various sources, see Meise (1969) 123–127 and Mehl (1974) 90–95.

[2] Quotations from Tacitus' *Annales* are taken from Koestermann (1971); those from Juvenal are from Clausen (1992). All translations are my own.

Most of the scholarly attention our sources have received has been devoted to determining what actually happened and why—in particular, scholars have been unable to fathom what Messalina and Silius could have been thinking, and they have therefore replicated the sense of puzzlement palpable in the sources.[3] It has been suggested, following those sources, that the divorce and remarriage were really part of an attempted coup, in which legal marriage to Messalina was necessary so that Silius could claim a right to rule through his guardianship of Britannicus.[4] The story has thus been used by modern historians to explain any number of Messalina's excesses, since, on such a reading, her adulterous affairs can be re-understood as political alliances aimed at overthrowing Claudius and securing her son's power, and thus her own.[5] The wedding has also been explained as a version of a Bacchic rite that was misrepresented by Messalina's enemies, in particular the freedman Narcissus.[6] It has even been described as an antecedent to the sort of "charade" wedding that Nero had with Sporus.[7] As Sandra Joshel points out, there are substantial problems with such reconstructions of the story of C. Silius and Messalina, since they tend to undervalue the fact that Messalina has been constructed by the narratives about her.[8]

Here I want to look principally at two versions of the story, those of Tacitus and Juvenal, and the ways in which they differ. Such a comparison can bring out the way this event—whatever it may have been—proved useful to different authors with different agendas and different, though related, concerns about the problems intrinsic to the position of the emperor vis-à-vis the Roman elite. In the end, I am interested in the story precisely as a story, as a narrative that these writers used to explore and comment on other ideas important to their work. For Tacitus, we will see, the story is the culmination of themes—all of which center around an

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[3] For one example of a scholar who throws up his hands, see Ehrhardt (1978) 68–69. The fullest general discussions of the Tacitean account are Vessey (1971) 398–401; Seif (1973) 97–139; Mehl (1974) 50–95; and Joshel (1997). Meise (1969) 127–132 reviews earlier historical scholarship on the question.

[4] Meise (1969) 152–169, especially 154. Others have seen different political motives; see, for example, Ferrero (1925) 152–155; Momigliano (1961) 120 n. 4; and more recently Levick (1990) 66–67.

[5] On Messalina's possible attempts at guiding the succession toward Britannicus and away from any other contenders, see Ehrhardt (1978).

[6] Colin (1956). Colin's argument seems driven in part by an unwillingness to believe Messalina would have done anything as stupid as the marriage.

[7] Levick (1990) 67.

[8] Joshel (1997) especially 226–230.

indictment of Claudius as *princeps*—found throughout what sometimes seems a rather miscellaneous book. For Juvenal, the story's ostensible purpose is in fact a way of commenting on two of his favorite themes: the danger for elite men created by the power of the emperor and the problem of powerful women.

Tacitus' version is found in what remains of the eleventh book of the *Annales*. Although we are mostly concerned with the final chapters of that book (11.26–38), in which the wedding, the conspiracy, and the aftermath are detailed, a summary of the whole will be helpful. The book opens partway through AD 47. The first four chapters relate Messalina's destruction of Valerius Asiaticus through false accusations, in part to gain control of his gardens. Two knights by the name of Petra are also destroyed for facilitating an affair between the empress' favorite, the actor Mnester, and her rival Poppaea. Following this are a discussion of whether advocates should be able to collect fees (11.5–7), an apparent digression on dynastic and other problems in Parthia and Armenia (11.8–10), and a description of Claudius' *Ludi Saeculares* (11.11). We are then told (11.12) that Messalina's next project would have been attacking Agrippina, but she is prevented by her new passion for C. Silius. Immediately following this reminder of Messalina's adulteries comes a discussion of various matters relating to Claudius, especially his censorship (11.13–15). Tacitus then discusses affairs in Germany (where Claudius checks Corbulo's successes; 11.16–20), the career of Curtius Rufus (11. 21), and the punishment of a knight who entered the emperor's presence while armed (11.22). The year 48 opens with the admission of citizens of Gallia Comata to the senate (11.23–24). This precedes another section on Claudius as censor (11.25); just as the last description of Claudius' censorial activities was preceded by Messalina's adulteries, this one is followed by the resumption of the story of Messalina and Silius. Thus the apparently random placement of the first mention of Messalina's adulterous passion in 11.12 is in fact a way for Tacitus to characterize Claudius as a censor whose own household is ironically out of control (11.12.2–3):[9]

> nam in C. Silium, iuventutis Romanae pulcherrimum, ita exarserat ut Iuniam Silanam, nobilem feminam, matrimonio eius exturbaret vacuoque adultero poteretur. neque Silius flagitii aut periculi nescius erat; sed certo,

[9] The fact that Tacitus frames Claudius' activities as censor with passages describing Messalina's adulteries has often been noted. For a concise description of the effect on the characterization of Claudius, see Koestermann (1967) 85.

> si abnueret, exitio et nonnulla fallendi spe, simul magnis praemiis, operire futura et praesentibus frui pro solacio habebat. illa non furtim, sed multo comitatu ventitare domum, egressibus adhaerescere, largiri opes honores; postremo, velut translata iam fortuna, servi liberti paratus principis apud adulterum visebantur.
>
> For she had developed such a passion for Gaius Silius, most beautiful of Roman youths, that she drove Junia Silana, a noble woman, from her marriage to him and took possession of an unspoken-for adulterer. And Silius was not unaware of the outrageousness of the act or the danger: but, since death was certain if he refused and there was some hope of pulling off the deception, and since the profits were great to boot, he consoled himself by ignoring things to come and enjoying present circumstances. She would visit his house not in secrecy but accompanied by a crowd, cling to his every foray out, shower him with wealth and preferments. Finally, as though the imperial lot had already been transferred, the emperor's slaves, freedmen, and property were commonly seen at the adulterer's house.

Several elements of this passage will recur in Juvenal and elsewhere. Silius is described as very attractive; he is also confronted by the choice of facing Claudius' wrath or Messalina's, but this is as close to sympathy as Tacitus comes (except for allowing Silius some courage in facing death): we are immediately told that Silius chooses not the course that is simply least dangerous, but the one that is the most advantageous. It is also worth noting that we are not, at this stage, told explicitly about the marriage or whose idea it was, though Messalina is implied, since she has Silius end his marriage to Junia Silana so that she can have him to herself. Later, we will learn that the idea of marriage in fact comes from Silius.

The narrative of Silius and Messalina resumes abruptly at the end of chapter 25, which is otherwise devoted to a census (11.25.5):

> isque illi finis inscitiae erga domum suam fuit: haud multo post flagitia uxoris noscere ac punire adactus, ut deinde ardesceret in nuptias incestas.
>
> And for him this was the end of his ignorance about his own household: not much later he was forced to learn of and punish his wife's outrageous deeds, so that he would subsequently yearn for an incestuous marriage.

The focus here is on Claudius' cluelessness rather than the specifics of Messalina's adultery.[10]

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[10] Dickison (1977) considers the way in which Tacitus uses comic elements, including evocations both of the *fabula palliata* stock characters and of the well-known adultery mime, throughout the account of Silius and Messalina. See also Vessey (1971) 385: "if the treatment of Tiberius is tragedy, the method used for Claudius is subtle satire, verging at times on broad comedy ..." On the comic and satiric elements in the fall of

Although the story takes up the rest of the book (11.26–38), it can be summarized quickly. Messalina has become depraved enough to want to do something worse than her usual adultery, and Silius too decides that there is no longer any point in pretense—better to forestall any punishment from Claudius down the road by taking matters into their own hands (11.26.1–2):

> Iam Messalina facilitate adulter⟨i⟩orum in fastidium versa ad incognitas libidines profluebat, cum abrumpi dissimulationem etiam Silius, [sive] fatali vecordia an imminentium periculorum remedium ipsa pericula ratus, urguebat: quippe non eo ventum, ut senecta⟨m⟩ principis opperire⟨n⟩tur. insontibus innoxia consilia, flagitii manifestis subsidium ab audacia petendum. adesse conscios paria metuentes. se caelibem, orbum, nuptiis et adoptando Britannico paratum. mansuram eandem Messalinae potentiam, addita securitate, si praevenirent Claudium, ut insidiis incautum, ita irae properum.
>
> At this point, the ease of her adulteries having turned into boredom, Messalina was drifting toward unheard-of lusts, when even Silius was urging that pretense should be dropped, whether because of doomed madness or thinking that the very dangers would be the remedy for the dangers that loomed: there was, of course, no need for them to wait for the emperor's old age; toothless plans were for the innocent; for those obviously guilty of a crime aid must be sought in boldness. Allies were present who feared the same thing. He was single, childless, and ready for marriage and adopting Britannicus. Messalina's sway would remain the same, with greater security, if they were to get the jump on Claudius, as swift to anger as he was unaware of treachery.

Although Messalina initially shrinks from an attempted coup, since she worries that Silius will tire of her once he has obtained power, she is so attracted by the outrageousness of marrying him that she agrees.[11] A wedding is conducted with all due form. At this point comes the passage with which we began (11.27), in which Tacitus acknowledges that the story of Messalina and Silius is hard to believe, *fabulosum*, a word that has been taken to indicate that what follows will draw on comedy and farce.[12]

Messalina narrative, see Vessey (1975) 400–401. Santoro L'hoir (2006) 235–237 discusses the comedy of the story as arising from an inversion of Euripidean tragedy, specifically through allusion to the *Bacchae*; on the inclusion of elements from the adultery mime, see 237.

11 On this passage, see Joshel (1997) 230–231.

12 On the rhetorical posture adopted by Tacitus in this passage, see Joshel (1997) 228–229. Dickison (1977) 645 takes *fabulosum* as a signal that dramatic and comic moments

Claudius' notorious freedmen secretaries are horrified at the prospect of a new ruler and an emboldened Messalina. While two of them, Pallas and Callistus, are hesitant, Narcissus stands firm. Like a sinister version of a comic *servus callidus* he is the major player in everything that happens next.[13] He gets word to Claudius by means of the emperor's two favorite mistresses, stage-manages Claudius' reactions, and makes sure that no one who might counsel leniency can get the emperor alone.

Back in Rome, Messalina, Silius, and others celebrate some sort of mock vintage in lavish fashion, unaware for the moment that Claudius is hurrying back to Rome. When rumor informs them not only that his arrival is imminent but that he is well informed about their wedding, they go their separate ways. Silius goes to the Forum, and pretends nothing extraordinary has happened, and Messalina goes to the gardens of Lucullus. Silius and many others are arrested. Messalina arranges to be waiting for Claudius on the road from Ostia. Narcissus makes sure that her pleas for mercy are shouted down by his accusations and the children are sent away unheard; he also ensures that the intercession of Vibidia, the senior Vestal, does no good.

At the praetorian camp, Claudius briefly addresses the guard, who demand that Silius be punished. He does not try to defend himself, but simply asks that death be swift. Numerous executions are ordered.

Back at the gardens of Lucullus, Messalina is desperate to stay alive. Narcissus knows that Claudius is likely to spare her, so on his own initiative he issues the order that she be killed. Her death in these particular gardens is appropriate—in the first extant portion of the book (11.1–3), Messalina acquired them by arranging for Valerius Asiaticus, their previous owner, to be tried and executed. While Claudius is dining, Messalina's death is announced; Narcissus does not volunteer whether she killed herself or not. Claudius shows no emotion as he finishes his banquet or even later, when he saw his freedmen gloating or his children grieving.

Both this individual story and the portrayal of Messalina herself are a means of characterizing Claudius.[14] The supporting cast is large, consisting of Messalina, Silius, several freedmen, the notorious actor Mnester,

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are to come. See also Martin and Woodman (1989) on *Ann.* 4.11.3 for the use of the word *fabulosum* in the historiographical and rhetorical traditions.

[13] On Narcissus' role as *servus callidus*, see Dickison (1977) 639.

[14] Dickison (1977) also suggests that this story, and much else in Books 11 and 12 of the *Annals*, is primarily a way of characterizing Claudius as unfit to rule. On Messalina's function in Tacitus' rhetoric, see Joshel (1997).

Britannicus and Octavia, Domitia Lepida (Messalina's mother), some mistresses of Claudius, and various wedding guests. Still, all the players focus attention on those traits of Claudius that Tacitus least likes: he changes his mind easily, his affairs are really controlled by freedmen or wives, he is forgetful, and he is not overly prone to human feelings.[15]

The story of Silius and Messalina is tightly integrated into the book, and in many ways it reinforces other themes of the work even as much as it relates the downfall of Messalina. For example, the court of Claudius is essentially represented as a venue for fatal intrigues that serve either the lust or greed of some courtier—something that even plays a role in the debate over whether or not advocates should be able to collect fees, since the proposed law against doing so arises in part because of such court intrigues. As Elizabeth Keitel has shown, the theme of court intrigue, familial betrayal, and dynastic politics also has a part in the seemingly unrelated narrative of events in Armenia and Parthia, which themselves foreshadow events in Claudius' own court.[16] Moreover, it has been suggested that Tacitus' books on Claudius make use of generic elements of comedy and mime to portray his reign as dangerous.[17]

Gaius Silius is represented as an alternative emperor to Claudius, and this theme too shows up elsewhere in the book, since real or trumped-up conspiracies against Claudius are hinted at several times. Even the description of events in Lower Germany plays into this, since we are told (11.18–20) that Claudius forces Corbulo to abandon recently won territory and withdraw west of the Rhine, in part to keep him from gaining too much popularity at home. Curtius Rufus is another potential example—the story of his prophesied proconsulship in Africa (11.21) sounds very much like anecdotes told about emperors and is perhaps drawn ultimately from stories about Alexander.

Interestingly, Tacitus' Messalina meets her downfall through her own possession of a trait otherwise associated with Claudius: *facilitas*. The freedmen assume that, if they do not take matters into their own hands,

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[15] The double charge that Claudius is both uxorious and prone to manipulation by his freedmen is also made by Juvenal, though not in his discussion of Silius in poem 10. The fourteenth satire ends by stating that the avaricious man will eventually reach a degree of greed that cannot be satisfied even by "the riches of Narcissus, whom Claudius Caesar indulged in all things, [Narcissus] whose commands he obeyed when ordered to kill his wife" (14.329–331 *divitiae Narcissi, | indulsit Caesar cui Claudius omnia, cuius | paruit imperiis uxorem occidere iussus*).

[16] Keitel (1978).

[17] Dickison (1977).

Messalina or others will persuade Claudius to be lenient, and they certainly want Messalina out of the way. Yet at the start of chapter 26, we find that Messalina herself has reached the preposterous state of wanting the marriage to Silius through another form of *facilitas* (11.26.1):

> iam Messalina facilitate adulter⟨i⟩orum in fastidium versa ad incognitas libidines profluebat …
>
> At this point, when the ease of her adulteries had turned into boredom, Messalina drifted toward unheard-of lusts …

Another passage describes the freedmen's fear that Claudius' fickleness will cause him to forgive Messalina, even as it states that his *facilitas* may help them defeat her (11.28.2):

> subibat sine dubio metus reputantes hebetem Claudium et uxori devinctum multasque mortes iussu Messalinae patratas. rursus ipsa facilitas imperatoris fiduciam dabat, si atrocitate criminis praevaluissent, posse opprimi, damnatam ante quam ream; sed in eo discrimen verti, si defensio audiretur, utque clausae aures etiam confitenti forent.
>
> Without doubt, fear crept over them as they thought again of dull and uxorious Claudius and the many deaths brought about by Messalina's order; on the other hand, the emperor's very fickleness gave them confidence that, if they could win out in advance through the foulness of the charge, she could be destroyed as a woman condemned before she was a woman tried. But the outcome turned on this: whether her defense would be heard and whether his ears would be shut even to a confession.

This theme of *facilitas* is woven thoroughly into the verbal texture of the book, which often makes human beings or their thoughts the subjects of verbs of flowing, rolling, changing, and turning. In general, images of fluidity and mutability are everywhere. In the passage mentioned above (11.26.1), for example, Messalina "drifted to unheard-of lusts" (*profluebat*), because of the *facilitas* of her adulteries. When she is found in the gardens of Lucullus by her executioner, she has literally been "poured onto the ground" (11.37.3 *fusam humi*). Other such images cluster in the vintage passage: *at Messalina non alias solutior luxu … fluere lacus … crine fluxo … lapsa vox in praesagium vertit* (all from 11.31.2–3) and *ceteris passim dilabentibus* (11.32.1). This vocabulary of change and ambiguity is thick in the passage describing Claudius' reaction as well: *inter diversas principis voces … revolveretur … aperire ambages … quin suspensa et quo ducerentur inclinatura … quis visus Caesaris averteret … diluendi criminis facultatem* (all from 11.34.1–3). Such language of fluidity reinforces the idea that the central problem with

the Claudian principate is its unstable nature.[18] The emperor is not in control of his wife, his household, or, by extension, anything else.[19]

Like Tacitus, Juvenal introduces Silius with a reference to his beauty, calling him "most beautiful of the patrician class" (10.331–332 *formonsissimus idem | gentis patriciae*). He is pointedly referred to as a patrician, but it is unclear what we should make of this, since the Silii were not patricians. Furneaux and Koestermann are possibly right to suggest that Messalina gained patrician status for Silius—Claudius did in that same year create new patrician families—as well as arranging for him to be named consul designate.[20] Or Juvenal could simply be using the word *patricius* in a non-technical sense, as Friedlaender and Courtney suggest.[21] It is also possible that Juvenal is just wrong, as Peter Green would have it[22]—yet if so, this is a mistake with a motive, since it is crucial to the way Juvenal conceives of this story (10.329–338):

> elige quidnam
> suadendum esse putes cui nubere Caesaris uxor
> destinat. optimus hic et formonsissimus idem
> gentis patriciae rapitur miser extinguendus
> Messalinae oculis; dudum sedet illa parato
> flammeolo Tyriusque palam genialis in hortis
> sternitur et ritu decies centena dabuntur
> antiquo, veniet cum signatoribus auspex.
> haec tu secreta et paucis commissa putabas?
> non nisi legitime volt nubere.

> Select whatever you think should be recommended to the one whom Caesar's wife marks out to marry. This one, the most excellent and also the most beautiful of the patrician class, is carried off to his doom, the wretch, by the eyes of Messalina. Long has she been sitting with her veil at the ready; the Tyrian couch is spread for all to see in the garden; according to the ancient custom a million will be given as a dowry; the officiant will come with the witnesses. Were you thinking that these things were secret and entrusted to only a few? She won't wed except properly!

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[18] See also Joshel (1997) 243.

[19] This is the view of Tacitus' Claudius books put forth by Vessey (1971) especially 385: "In particular, through his account of the reign of Claudius runs the idea that the *princeps* himself was a man unworthy of his office and that his character and acts were alike an affront to the greatness and dignity of Rome." On the ways in which Claudius' failure to control Messalina is central to Tacitus' understanding of what is wrong with the Claudian principate, see Joshel (1997) 241–242.

[20] Furneaux (1907) on *Ann.* 11.12.2; Koestermann (1967) 50.

[21] Friedlaender (1895) 485; Courtney (1980) 485.

[22] Green (1998) 190.

In the Tacitean account, the doomed Silius is a co-conspirator of Messalina, through whom he plans to take the throne and presumably assassinate the emperor. Moving forward with the wedding is actually his idea. Juvenal's Gaius Silius, by contrast, is more victim than villain—significantly, Silius is not the subject of a single active verb in the passage just quoted. This is the most striking change here, since the emphasis on Silius' attractiveness and on the formality of the wedding very much corresponds to Tacitus' account. Moreover, as Courtney notes, being the subject of *rapitur* puts Silius "in the position of a woman being carried off by a man."[23] In the context of marriage one thinks of the Sabine women. The development of the ideas in lines 331–333 is noteworthy also for its connection to elegy. Status and beauty define Silius, but the juxtaposition *gentis patriciae* and *rapitur miser* highlights a change in real status: the image of the *miser* Silius being carried off to his destruction by the eyes of Messalina turns him into a version of Propertius, yet whereas Propertius' disgrace results from his own behavior and inability to regain emotional control, Juvenal's Silius is put in his predicament by the empress' lustful whim.

What follows also corresponds to elements of Tacitus' version (10.338–345):

> quid placeat dic.
> ni parere velis, pereundum erit ante lucernas;
> si scelus admittas, dabitur mora parvula, dum res
> nota urbi et populo contingat principis aurem.
> dedecus ille domus sciet ultimus. interea tu
> obsequere imperio, si tanti vita dierum
> paucorum. quidquid levius meliusque putaris,
> praebenda est gladio pulchra haec et candida cervix.

> Tell me what you decide. If you won't obey her, you'll have to die before sunset. If you commit the crime, you'll get a brief delay—until an event already familiar to the city and the people reaches the emperor's ear. He'll be the last to know the disgrace to his house. In the meantime, you obey the command, if a few days of life are worth so much. Whatever course you think easier and better, this fine, fair neck must be offered up to the sword.

Juvenal's ostensible point in this *exemplum* is to show that beauty is not something to be wished for.[24] He seems to sympathize with Silius, who is a victim of Messalina's lust and arrogant stupidity (inasmuch as she

[23] Courtney (1980) 485.

[24] Satire 10, though one of Juvenal's most influential poems, has not received as many

insists on a public wedding when she is already married, and to the emperor at that).[25] Moreover, Silius is doubly trapped: if he does the honorable thing and resists Messalina, he will be murdered. If he goes ahead with the wedding, he will be executed by the emperor. The fact that there is no escape is underscored by the gerundives *pereundum* (339) and *praebenda* (345). So far, this agrees with the earliest part of Tacitus' Gaius Silius narrative. Yet, whereas Tacitus lets Silius' baser side come through, Juvenal avoids doing so.

I want to extract several points from Juvenal's *exemplum*. The first is that Juvenal's Silius is a victim, whose victimization points up the warped state into which Rome has gotten itself. The weak have always been prey to the strong, but Silius himself was one of the strong: *optimus hic et formonsissimus idem | gentis patriciae* (10.331–332). The existence of a woman with the singular power possessed by an emperor's wife suggests a dangerous distortion of Rome's social and gender hierarchies, since, before there was an emperor, the wives of even the most powerful men of the elite would still largely have been unable to control the fates of other powerful men. The emperor's wife, however, has a real, if extra-legal, ability to do so. This is even truer of the emperor himself, whose existence renders everyone else powerless. In Juvenal's more sympathetic telling of the story, it is the empress' lust, not his own ambition, that causes Silius to become an adulterer, a conspirator, and ultimately a corpse.

Moreover, this *exemplum* shows something about the way the emperor and his wife affect traditional institutions. We have already noted that Silius' status as a high-born Roman is now meaningless, since he is effectively treated like a slave. But marriage is also warped by Messalina's insistence on a proper, public wedding. By insisting on carrying out a traditional act, getting married, in the wrong way, Messalina inverts traditional notions of marriage. Marriage has in fact turned into a form of adultery. In addition, this is a wedding in which the bride calls the

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interpretations as one would expect, and our passage is not commonly treated outside of the commentaries. For overviews of the whole, see Highet (1954) 125–129; Eichholz (1956); Lawall (1958); Courtney (1980) 446–454; Tengstrom (1980); Braund (1988) 184–186; Fishelov (1990); and Hooley (2007) 123–124. On theatricality in the Silius and Messalina passage, see Maier (1983) 52–53.

25 Eichholz (1956) 67 sees no sympathy for Silius in Juvenal's account; Lawall (1958) 26 argues that there is both sympathy and pathos in Juvenal's version of the story. Maier (1983) 52–53 sees Juvenal's Silius as a victim.

shots—a kind of anti-wedding that turns marriage into adultery, a man into a kind of bride, and a patrician into a slave.[26]

While Silius' downfall is partly self-inflicted (he goes ahead with adultery and a very public insult to the emperor), Juvenal emphasizes instead that it is imposed by realities beyond his control: Silius is physically beautiful, the empress cannot be resisted, and the emperor is the ultimate source of punitive power. Thus Juvenal's Silius is a person who does the wrong things but whose character is ambiguous; because Juvenal has made him somewhat sympathetic, we cannot so easily condemn him. Caught in a web, Silius reacts. He might have become an *exemplum* of an honorable young man doing the right thing when propositioned by a powerful but unscrupulous woman—as Bellerophon and Hippolytus, mentioned just before our passage (10.325), had done, but that would have suited neither historical fact (though Juvenal does not always get history right) nor the themes of the satire. It is significant in this regard that Juvenal does not envision suicide as a potential option for the young man.

In some ways, the best Tacitean analogue to Juvenal's Silius is not Silius himself but the actor Mnester (11.36.1–2):

> Solus Mnester cunctationem attulit, dilaniata veste clamitans, adspiceret verberum notas, reminisceretur vocis, qua se obnoxium iussis Messalinae dedisset: aliis largitione aut spei magnitudine, sibi ex necessitate culpam; nec cuiquam ante pereundum fuisse, si Silius rerum poteretur. commotum his et pronum ad misericordiam Caesarem perpulere liberti, ne tot inlustribus viris interfectis histrioni consuleretur: sponte an coactus tam magna peccavisset, nihil referre.
>
> Only Mnester caused hesitation, pleading, with his clothing in shreds, that he [Claudius] look at the marks of the whips, that he remember the words with which he had made him obedient to the orders of Messalina: for others, the fault came through bribery or ambition; for him it had come of necessity, and no one would have had to die sooner if Silius were in charge. The freedmen impelled Caesar, who had been moved by these arguments and inclined to pity, not to spare an actor when so many distinguished men had been killed: whether he committed such great crimes of his own accord or under compulsion did not matter at all.

Messalina's power depends, to some extent, on her role as emperor's wife, and one of Juvenal's targets in such an *exemplum* is the existence of an

[26] Discussing the Tacitean portrait of Messalina, Joshel (1997) 231 has good comments on the way Messalina's violation of boundaries leads to a kind of collapse of social, moral, and political order.

emperor.[27] The household of Claudius is useful to a satirist with this particular concern with autocracy, since he was an emperor notoriously prone to control by two groups over whom he should have resolutely exercised power: his wives and his freedmen. Indeed, Tacitus' account of the affair and its aftermath emphasizes both the way that Claudius is treated as an obvious fool by Messalina and the role his freedmen played in deciding how she and Silius should be punished.

Juvenal's Messalina fits well with themes he explores elsewhere, for example in the sixth satire, in which wives routinely commit adultery and thwart, control, and destroy their husbands. But in the case of the emperor's wife, Juvenal and all Roman men now have to contend with a woman more powerful than any man except, perhaps, for her husband. The narrative of Gaius Silius is particularly pointed in this regard since it emphasizes that he is in fact a man of high birth, but his high birth cannot help him in the face of the empress' power. This too fits in with themes typical of Juvenal, who elsewhere positions both Caligula and Nero, and therefore all of their misdeeds, as the work of imperial wives (6.614–626):

> tamen hoc tolerabile, si non
> et furere incipias ut avunculus ille Neronis,
> cui totam tremuli frontem Caesonia pulli
> infudit. quae non faciet quod principis uxor?
> ardebant cuncta et fracta conpage ruebant
> non aliter quam si fecisset Iuno maritum
> insanum. minus ergo nocens erit Agrippinae
> boletus, siquidem unius praecordia pressit
> ille senis tremulumque caput descendere iussit
> in caelum et longa manantia labra saliva:
> haec poscit ferrum atque ignes, haec potio torquet,
> haec lacerat mixtos equitum cum sanguine patres.
> tanti partus equae, tanti una venefica constat.

> Still, this might be tolerable if you weren't beginning to rave like that uncle of Nero, into whom Caesonia poured the whole caul of a shaky-legged foal. What woman won't do what the emperor's wife does? The universe

[27] Joshel's discussion of Messalina in Tacitus is useful on this point: "Tacitus is not merely blaming Messalina for the events of her husband's reign. Rather, she functions in his narrative as a sign both of the concentration of state functions in the person of the *princeps* that Tacitus attributes to the founder of the principate and to Claudius (1.2.1; 11.5.1), which in turn belonged to Trajan, and of the corrupt exercise of that power. Thus, woman and her desire ultimately serve to represent in negative terms an exercise of male power disapproved by Tacitus as senator and historian: the emperor's power appears as a voracious female desire that drags in men and property and flows out to create a mess in the family, the social order, and the empire" (Joshel (1997); this quotation is from 244).

> blazed and fell apart, its framework broken, just as if Juno had driven her husband insane. So Agrippina's mushroom will be less harmful, given that *it* stopped the heart of one old man and ordered his trembling head and lips dripping with long strands of drool, to descend to heaven. But *this* [Caesonia's potion] demands fire and the sword; this potion tortures; it mutilates senators along with the slaughter of knights. Such is the power of a mare's offspring; such is the power of one poisoner.

Our other major sources for the marriage of Silius and Messalina cannot be treated here in detail, but a few preliminary comments can be made.[28] Like Tacitus, Suetonius uses the story mainly to characterize Claudius as a muddled, unaware cuckold, whose wives betray him when they are not using him for some end—in fact, this use of the story is somewhat less surprising in the biographer, where we expect narrative to serve the end of characterization, than in the historian. Nor does Suetonius give the story the attention that Tacitus does. For Dio, we have only the epitome of Book 61; if that can be trusted, Messalina seems to have been the focal character, but this impression, of course, may be the result of the epitomizing process. Little else can be said about his account. The pseudo-Senecan *Octavia* mentions the story only briefly; Octavia attributes the wedding with Silius to a madness that afflicted Messalina as part of a larger scheme of divine persecution of her house. This would seem to make Messalina a tragic victim along the lines of Phaedra, but we do have to remember that this description of her comes from her daughter.[29]

Whatever historical reality lies behind the marriage of Gaius Silius and Messalina, the story of their affair, wedding, and downfall proved useful to Tacitus and Juvenal not merely as a way of recording something that had or could have happened. For Juvenal it is part of a larger thematic scrutiny of powerful women and the decline of Roman institutions and elite liberty because of the very existence of the principate.[30] In his story Claudius himself is beside the point, as is Silius, since he is mostly relevant as an example of a not terribly strong-willed victim of circumstances. What matters is the problem that has come to exist for elite men. For

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[28] The *Apocolocyntosis* portrays Claudius as the (judicial) murderer of Messalina, Gaius Silius, and Mnester, but their connection to each other is not mentioned. This is perhaps unsurprising since it would not have suited the purposes of that work to suggest that any of Claudius' "victims" may have played a role in their own downfall.

[29] On this passage, see Ferri (2003) 196–204.

[30] Rutland (1978) also sees connections between Tacitus' attitude toward imperial wives and Juvenal's worries about women in the sixth satire; her focus is on Livia and Agrippina rather than Messalina.

Tacitus, the story is a way of summing up the problematic principate of Claudius as an unstable regime run by all the wrong people. To some extent, Tacitus too has concerns about emperors and their families generally, but he has used the story of Messalina and Silius to outline the unique contours of Claudius' particular way of being emperor. Tacitus' Silius has to be a more detailed and stronger character than the cipher we find in Juvenal, since Tacitus needs a male to contrast with an emperor so easily controlled by women. Claudius may be under the sway of Messalina, but Silius is not. His political aspirations may be unsuccessful, but he takes the lead in politics rather than Messalina, who in many ways is a female counterpart to Claudius. Both are unstable and unreliable. She is a slave to her passions and perverse character; he is easily swayed by stronger personalities. While Tacitus does not paint a particularly sympathetic portrait of Silius, he does characterize him as having a more traditional Roman character than the other major players.

For both authors, the character of the story is already exemplary and literary: Juvenal's Gaius Silius is another Bellerophon or Hippolytus, and Tacitus begins his detailed narrative of the events by highlighting the fact that his story is fantastic. We cannot solve the riddle of what really happened at the end of Messalina's life, but the fact that stories such as this are so perplexing opens up an opportunity to understand how Roman writers used the figures who people their history to talk about present concerns as well as past events. Tacitus found in Silius, Messalina, and Claudius himself a way to think about how the personal qualities of those at the heart of imperial power shape the course of the state. To some extent, we have to take seriously his claim not to have written the story *miraculi causa*. To him it is true not because the events that he describes actually happened, but because of the idea of power that they encode, both for Claudius' reign and for autocracy generally.

While Juvenal's concerns do overlap with those of Tacitus, the satirist's goals are different. Even though he dresses his views in the garb of specific emperors from the past, there really is only one emperor in Juvenal.[31] Whether he names that ruler Claudius or Nero, Caligula or Domitian, we are dealing with a figure for autocratic power and the perversities Juvenal sees it as entailing. The historical details of his imperial *exempla* are not always accurate, but I suggest that they do not need to be, since they represent only the kind of things that happen under emperors. Even

[31] See Waters (1970) 68.

in his more memorable description of Messalina, in which she outlasts the whores in a brothel (6.115–132), her identity as wife of Claudius and mother of Britannicus matters mostly as an index of the perversity and lusts of women, even at the highest level of power.

Finally, it is worth considering the place of the Silius and Messalina *exemplum* within the tenth satire. The poem attempts to show that the things people commonly pray for are bad for them, and it is probably best to see in it a kind of *reductio ad absurdum* in which there is no potentially happy life. My analysis of this particular *exemplum* would seem to disconnect it from the framework in which it occurs—Juvenal's argument that there is no point in praying for beauty—but in fact his argument works only because of the underlying conception of female behavior and imperial power. Silius is beautiful and so Messalina lusts for him. Juvenal's version of this story does not so much prove that beauty is destructive as show that no one is safe when female desire and imperial power intersect.[32]

[32] For their helpful comments and suggestions, I would like to thank Stephen C. Smith and M. Christine Marquis.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE FIGURE OF SENECA IN TACITUS AND THE *OCTAVIA*[*]

Matthew Taylor

Sir Ronald Syme observed that Tacitus was not just the exponent of a process of historical change but "also an item in it, a personal document."[1] Likewise Seneca, whose dramatic and philosophical writings defined the literature of the Julio-Claudian age, was himself implicated in the world they so richly represented. This 'historical' identity has greatly affected the exercise of reading Seneca's corpus; it has generally necessitated the due consideration of information supplied about the author by supposedly less imaginative literature—and in particular by the *Annals* of Tacitus.[2] But for the purpose of this paper I propose to examine how this symbiosis of *auctor* and *actor* functions in the opposite direction: that is, to consider how Seneca's identity as a writer—"the embodiment of an epoch," as Syme described him[3]—has generic and thematic implications within the historical world constructed by Tacitus.

There is by now a prevailing consensus that this world is replete with references to the language and subject matter of tragedy, references which encourage the reader to understand the Julio-Claudian dynasty as an entity belonging more to that genre than to history, and which emphasize

* I would like to thank all the speakers and attendees at the *Proxima Poetis* conference for creating such a warm and stimulating environment. Thanks are also due to Thomas Habinek, Daniel Richter, E. Del Chrol, and Lisl Walsh for commenting on versions of this chapter, and to A.J. Boyle, in whose seminars on Imperial Latin literature and Roman tragedy it was born. Any inaccuracies remain my own.

1 Syme (1958) v.

2 See, for example, the introduction to Boyle (1987).

3 Syme (1958) 336: "Seneca was the greatest figure in Latin literature since the days of Augustus … The next generation canvassed his qualities." This presumably includes Tacitus himself. See also 141. Goldberg (2003) 31 suggests that the debt of both the *Octavia* and *Hercules Oetaeus* to Senecan tragedy demonstrates the circulation and appreciation of his plays. So Boyle (2008) xxxv and esp. lxvii. Cf. Quintilian's oft-cited complaint about the popularity of Senecan verbiage (8.3.31).

the performative nature of Imperial political life.[4] Syme himself recognized that the elaboration of Seneca as a character in the *Annals* offers a clear signpost to this particular element of Tacitus' historiographical agenda.[5] The use of a Seneca-character in this fashion—to draw attention to an allusive system designed to elicit a particular, dramatic understanding of events—is a device Tacitus shares with the pseudo-Senecan play *Octavia*. Indeed, the latter takes particular advantage of both its setting and subject to make its Seneca the allusive signpost par excellence, as its stage-context immediately activates the literary implications of this character and primes its audience for the effect he is meant to conjure. Since the *Octavia* makes such deliberate display of this device, I believe that a comparative analysis can serve to enhance the understanding of its function within the *Annals*. I also hope that highlighting the compositional similarities between the *Annals* and the *Octavia* will add somewhat to the esteem in which the latter is held, and strengthen the case for Tacitus' familiarity with this rich and interesting text.[6]

As recently as 2003, Frances Billot suggested that there had already been a profound shift in sympathy towards just such a familiarity,[7] but the truth is that scholarship generally maintains a studied reticence to exert any such claim. Billot does make a compelling demonstration that several of the characterizations in the *Octavia* are systematically, and perhaps knowingly, inverted by Tacitus in the *Annals*, and her contribution complements Rolando Ferri's now quite influential articulation of the debt owed by *Annals* 14.63–64 to *Octavia* 929–946.[8] Yet, commenting on

[4] Treated most recently in a systematic study by Santoro L'Hoir (2006), but see also Syme (1958), Segal (1973), Mellor (1993), Bartsch (1994), Henderson (1998), Woodman (1998c), et al.

[5] Syme (1958) 316–317 on how the portrayal of Seneca makes manifest Tacitus' movement "in the direction of drama or prose fiction;" see also Santoro L'Hoir (2006) 55 on how the central position of Seneca within the narrative compels the reader to recognize "Senecan metaphor" in Tacitus' process of characterization.

[6] I do not wish to retread the arguments made for the dating of the *Octavia* here. Suffice it to say that the prevailing consensus—actually a lively conflict between those who favor a Galban date (e.g. Wiseman (2002)) and those who prefer a Flavian date (e.g. Ferri (2003b))—is that its composition pre-dates that of the *Annals* (a pragmatic assertion shared by Billot (2003) 140). Even those scholars who maintain Tacitus did not base his account on the *Octavia* at all (e.g. Wiseman, Kragelund, Junge, all discussed below) still generally agree on this. See Boyle (2008) xiv–xvi for a recent and thorough summary of the state of the question.

[7] Billot (2003) 127, with reference to Whitman (1978) 125.

[8] Ferri (1998), cited e.g. by Wilson (2003b) 7 to make the general case (albeit cagily) for Tacitus' familiarity, and developed further by Devillers (2000). The latter is then cited

Ferri, Patrick Kragelund maintains that even though there are "intriguing parallels" in the texts, "they need not indicate a common source … let alone direct dependence," and prefers a mutual reliance upon some unofficial "tradition"; Ferri has since retreated to this common source explanation for other similarities.[9] Rebekka Junge meanwhile opts to emphasize the differences in the two accounts, and thus favors their divergence from a shared antecedent.[10] Perhaps more surprisingly, even T.P. Wiseman, whose imaginative and inspiring work has almost singlehandedly rekindled serious interest in Roman historical drama, denies a direct link between Tacitus and the *Octavia*, suggesting instead the latter's mediation through another (presumably less discerning) historian.[11]

Why such guarded interpretation from the archaeologist of *Remus*, who in the very same paragraph seems to suggest that Messalina's marriage to Silius in the *Annals* could itself be based on an unattested satyr-play? As Sander Goldberg has observed, the simple fact that we cannot identify the author of the *Octavia* "has clouded and sometimes discouraged discussion of the text," and one can only assume that the unknown poet's repeated characterization in terms such as "jejeune," a "talented amateur," or "not a great *virtuoso* of dramatic versification"[12] has likewise rendered him unfit for inclusion amongst Tacitus' sources. Yet, even with its dubious authorship, Goldberg has made a strong demonstration of the utility of the *Octavia* as a literary *comparandum* to Seneca's tragedies, and Marcus Wilson likewise allows (with characteristic caginess) that Tacitus' knowledge of the *Octavia* "if true, makes the play also particularly relevant to the study of [his] sources and compositional technique."[13] It is the remarkable potential these texts hold for mutual illumination that I wish to explore.

The precise terms of the affinity that Tacitus and the *Octavia* share can be demonstrated quite immediately in their respective treatments of

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by Chaumartin (2002) to support the assertion that in certain cases Tacitus follows the *Octavia*'s account directly.

[9] Kragelund (2002) 50; Ferri (2003a), e.g. on the similarity between *Octavia* 371–372 and *Annals* 14.8, for which see below.

[10] Junge (1999) esp. 193–196.

[11] Wiseman (2002) 87–88: "What Tacitus' later text owes to the *Octavia* no doubt comes indirectly (perhaps through Cluvius Rufus, a historian much involved with Neronian theatre) …" Cluvius, it will be recalled, is Tacitus' scapegoat for such nuggets as Agrippina regularly offering herself to Nero as an afternoon digestif (*Ann.* 14.2.1).

[12] By Goldberg (2003), Herington (1961), and Ferri (2003b), respectively.

[13] Goldberg (2003), esp. 31–36; Wilson (2003b) 7.

the assassination of Agrippina.[14] The texts show a remarkable similarity in both the structure of their accounts and the particular details they preserve, especially with regard to the allusive quality of Agrippina's last words, which resonate strongly with material from the Senecan dramatic corpus. The narrative in Book 14 of the *Annals* proceeds as follows: growing bolder in his reign, and with Poppaea urging him on, Nero resolves to do away with his mother (14.1.1); the freedman Anicetus concocts a plan to disguise her murder as a shipwreck (14.3.3); Nero invites her to a banquet at Baiae, where he gives a grand performance of filial piety and convinces her to board the specially prepared ship (14.4.3–4); the ship is launched on a calm sea and its roof then made to collapse, but the scheme is unsuccessful and Agrippina is able to escape over the rail and into the water, whence she is rescued by some fishing boats (14.5.1–3); upon receiving word of her deliverance, Nero throws a sword at her messenger's feet and accuses him of making an attempt upon his life, then dispatches Anicetus to finish the job (14.7.4–5); the latter, accompanied by a trierarch and marine centurion, corners Agrippina in her villa, where she is struck on the head; then, as the centurion draws his sword, she stretches forth her midriff to him and begs him strike her there (14.8.5 *iam ad mortem centurioni ferrum distringenti protendens uterum, 'ventrem feri' exclamavit multisque vulneribus confecta est*).

In the *Octavia*, the chorus of Romans narrates a strikingly similar sequence of events, beginning with her description as "a mother taken by treachery" (312 *captam fraude parentem*). There follows the incident of the deadly ship—again on a placid sea[15]—(309–318), her escape and subsequent rescue by loyal servants who swim out from the shore (345–355), and then Nero sends an agent, described alternately as *satelles* (366) and *ministrum* (368), to kill her. Agrippina's death scene is worth quoting in full (364–376):

missus peragit iussa satelles,
reserat dominae pectora ferro.
caedis moriens illa ministrum
  rogat infelix,
utero dirum condat ut ensem:
'hic est, hic est fodiendus' ait
'ferro, monstrum qui tale tulit.'

[14] Noted most recently by Boyle (2008), who allows that Tacitus may have been influenced by the *Octavia*.

[15] See Goldberg (2003) 33–34 on the peculiarity of this detail. Also Segal (1973) 112, who characterizes it as both editorializing and perhaps even alluding to Virgil.

post hanc vocem cum supremo
mixtam gemitu
animam tandem per fera tristem
vulnera reddit.

Tacitus' version is less elaborated, but the sentiment is the same: strike me in the womb, because it bore the son that brought me my death.[16]

This general tradition regarding Agrippina's last words is continued in the later account of Cassius Dio, where they appear closer to those recorded in the *Octavia* (61.13: καὶ τὴν γαστέρα ἀπογυμνώσασα "παῖε," ἔφη "ταύτην, Ἀνίκητε, παῖε, ὅτι Νέρωνα ἔτεκεν").[17] Dio's version also adds the detail that Nero and Seneca (not Anicetus) actually adopted the device of the collapsing ship from a performance they saw in the theater (61.12.2). While it is tempting to suggest that Dio developed this conclusion because Tacitus' account so closely parallels that found in a historical drama, the coincidence should probably not be pushed that far.[18] It is, however, somewhat intriguing that a subsequent analytical imagination, and one that in certain details followed the tradition represented by the *Octavia*, made a further connection between the murder of Agrippina and the world of Roman theater. Indeed, to the extent that Dio's account actually suggests a synthesis of its predecessors—melding Tacitus' narrative prose with the epigram from the *Octavia*—it is perhaps interesting that a similar amalgamation evidently occurred within Tacitus' own manuscript tradition. What has generally been understood as a quotation from the *Octavia* appears interpolated at 14.8.5 in a manuscript of the *Annals* discovered in 1950 (Leidensis BPL.16B), producing the line *protendens uterum hunc exclamavit hunc feri, monstrum qui tale tulit multisque vulneribus confecta est*.[19] C.W. Mendell has argued plausibly

[16] John Miller has also drawn my attention to what may be a similar wordplay in the coincidence of *ferrum* ... *feri* at *Ann.* 14.8.5 and the sequence of *ferro* ... *tulit* ... *fera* at the same point in the story in *Oct.* 372–375.

[17] Goodyear (1965) 319 allows that Dio and the author of the *Octavia* may have followed a common source, or even Dio the *Octavia*.

[18] Indeed, Dio (or one of his sources) may well have deduced this information through the correlation of earlier accounts with a letter of Seneca's, in which the latter describes the varieties of theater machinery which, amongst other feats of engineering, can be made to collapse in upon themselves (*Ep.* 88.22).

[19] See Ferri (2003a) on *Oct.* 369–370, who notes it is written in the same hand as the rest of the text. For arguments that this MS may represent either an earlier or a separate tradition from the Medicean MSS upon which most modern editions are largely based, see Mendell and Ives (1951), Mendell (1954), and Koestermann (1960) xiv–xvii. Martin (1964) and Goodyear (1965) are generally more skeptical, but still allow for its value in certain specific cases.

that it was this manuscript from the fifteenth century that inspired the more extended and obvious quotation from the *Octavia* (368–376) that appears in later manuscripts of Tacitus.[20] He was markedly less successful in convincing subsequent editors of Tacitus that the Leidensis version should actually be preferred to the traditional reading, but even if it is just an interpolation it is striking how the two accounts are close enough so as to allow (or even invite) the elaboration of Tacitus' version with material from the *Octavia*.

Such compelling similarities have not passed without comment, and the two versions of Agrippina's last words recorded in the *Octavia* and the *Annals* have both been understood as alluding to Senecan tragedy in order to situate the murder within the imaginative field of mythical matricides; the common direction of their allusions may even have contributed to the ease of their integration or confusion. The assertion that Agrippina's last words in the *Octavia* bear such a resonance with the Senecan corpus is by no means controversial. Ferri notes in his commentary the correspondence with lines of Jocasta's in both the *Phoenissae* (447 *hunc petite uentrem*) and the *Oedipus* (1038–1039 *hunc dextra hunc pete | uterum capacem, qui virum et gnatos tulit*), and that *hic est hic est* is found in a similar position at the start of line 707 in the *Troades*, where Andromache is talking about her son, Astyanax.[21] To his list should be added both Phaedra's last words (1197 *mucrone pectus impium iusto patet*) and Hecuba's cries for death in the *Troades* (1001 *reclude ferro pectus*).[22] The last words of Agrippina therefore represent a richly allusive as well as dramatic climax in the *Octavia*, one that invites the audience to remember mothers and matricides from tragedy, and which, through association with the Oedipus myth in particular, even hints at the rumors of incest between herself and Nero.

The equivalent passage in Tacitus mirrors the *Octavia*'s sentiment perfectly, although it is more succinct in achieving its psychological effect;[23] it certainly resonates quite suggestively with the Senecan play-

[20] Mendell (1954) 253–254, who reads the quotation in several specimens from what he designates the Genoan MSS. Such an influence is contested by Goodyear (1965) 319, noting in particular the change from *hunc* to *hic* across the two readings.

[21] Ferri (2003a) ad loc. So, too, Boyle (2008).

[22] Goldberg (2003) 35 n. 43 also includes *HO* 1678 (and, I presume, 1679), but it is perhaps less clear that the *Octavia* could be alluding to this text.

[23] Junge (1999) 194 suggests this is indicative of Tacitus' characteristic *breuitas*. Mendell (1954) 254 describes Tacitus' version as "bald," and Willis (1988) 160, arguing for the deletion of *uentrem* as spurious and unnecessary, believes his interpolator agreed.

book (e.g. *Phoen.* 447). R.J. Tarrant, in commenting upon this intertextual nexus (and focussing particularly on the similarity between the *Annals* and Seneca's *Oedipus*), does not, however, allow for the influence on Tacitus of either the *Octavia* or the plays of Seneca, citing instead a possible archetype for all such formulations in a *controversia* summarized by Seneca the Elder (*Contr.* 2.5.7 *caede ventrem, ne tyrannicidas pariat*). He goes so far as to suggest that such a rhetorical topos may have actually been employed by Agrippina herself at the time of her death, whence it arrives in the historiographical tradition and is referenced by Seneca to imbue his Jocasta with contemporary resonance.[24] Tarrant's aim, is, of course, to suggest that Latin literature had established a canon sufficient to supply a meaningful field of allusion to authors like Seneca and Tacitus, a canon that would be naturally preferred to its Greek antecedents. Under the very terms of Tarrant's argument, however, it then seems quite drastic to prefer the positivist solution that we are receiving Agrippina's actual words, rather than allow the possibility that Tacitus is in fact making deliberate reference to Seneca's tragedies—or even to the *Octavia*, a dramatic account of the same events. Certainly Tacitus himself makes no such claim to truth, finishing his account with the addendum "haec consensu produntur" (14.9.1).

Of course, the historian does not even have to be citing a specifically Senecan tradition for his allusion to evoke similar implications to the passage in the *Octavia*. The womb-topos in relation to matricide may have had a longer history in Classical literature—as far back as Greek tragedy[25]—and, even if he was following the *Octavia*, he apparently rendered Agrippina's words so as to be less allusive to Seneca in particular. What all these possible solutions have in common, however, is the application—whether by Agrippina or by the author(s)—of an interpretative frame to the event of her death, one that is aimed at conditioning how it is received and understood—be it as a tragedy, as implying

[24] Tarrant (1995) 227–228, expanding on a citation by Winterbottom (1976). See in particular n. 54: "Tacitus did not invent Agrippina's last words (which are similarly reported in Dio and were known to the author of the Octavia, cf. 370–372), and there is no reason to doubt that Agrippina herself had the wit and the familiarity with rhetoric to produce them …" Junge (1999) 195 allows for a similar provenance.

[25] Junge (1999) 195 adduces Sophocles' *Oedipus* (1255–1257) as a possible predecessor for Seneca (and thus *Octavia*), both for its subject matter, and because of the "emphatische geminatio" of both "hunc" and "γυναῖκα." Cf. Eur. *El.* 1206–1209 and Aesch. *Cho.* 928. Thanks to Thomas Habinek for reminding me to address such a tradition.

a history of incest, or as part of the general theater of imperial Rome. This coincidence with regard to Agrippina can indeed be explained by a common source, but the texts continue to use parallel allusive techniques such as this in order to elucidate similar thematic concerns of power and authority, to which I now turn.

If Book 13 of the *Annals* is the account of a boy emperor "ruled by a woman" and whose reign is conducted "through his teachers" (13.6.2), Book 14 narrates Nero's struggle to reach his majority through the assertion of his own power and the overcoming of childhood guardians. The very existence of the latter retains him in a state of boyhood, and requires their (sometimes violent) removal from the text in order for his realization as adult and ruler, with all the dire consequences that portends.[26] Poppaea informs Nero that the public perception is that he is under "another's orders" and subject to the "power of his mother" (14.1.1–3). Moreover, it is public knowledge that he makes use of *alienae facundiae* (13.3.2), such as in his speeches on *clementia* made in the case of Plautius Lateranus (13.11.2):

> secutaque lenitas in Plautium Lateranum quem ob adulterium Messalinae ordine demotum reddidit senatui, clementiam suam obstringens crebris orationibus quas Seneca, testificando quam honesta praeciperet vel iactandi ingenii, voce principis vulgabat

The shift in subject across the sentence reflects the perceived relationship of power, with Nero slipping from active participant to mere instrument of Seneca's authorship. This reliance on others for such fundamental activity is no idle charge for an emperor, and Tacitus shows us it must be addressed if Nero is to come into his own *potentia*. For if the murder of Agrippina is an important rite of passage for Nero—his "debut as a megastar," as Henderson put it—it still leaves him under the sway of Seneca. His big scene (which Tacitus explicitly describes as such), the framing of Agrippina's messenger at 14.7.6, reads as if it were cribbed from the plot of Seneca's *Phaedra*,[27] and Nero's *praeceptor* continues to ghost-write him even after the event, as Tacitus incorporates the

[26] Segal (1973) 113–115 also identifies this sequence as significant for the development of Nero, placing particular emphasis on the murders of Britannicus and Agrippina, and underlining the general idea of personal growth immediately suggested by *coalita* at 14.1.1.

[27] *ipse audito venisse missu Agrippinae nuntium Agermum,* ***scaenam*** *ultro criminis parat, gladiumque, dum mandata perfert, abicit inter pedes eius.* Cf. Sen. *Phae.* 729–730 *ensemque trepida liquit attonitus fuga.* | *pignus tenemus sceleris.*

rumor that Seneca penned the letter he sent to the senate following her murder.[28]

Seneca's power over Nero is that of the written and spoken word—the emperor speaks with his voice. His attachment to the word is a constant conceit in the *Annals*—from his first entrance he is characterized as possessing the *praecepta eloquentiae* (13.2.1) and a *professoria lingua* (13.14.3). It is this power that precipitates the dramatic and pivotal confrontation of Seneca and Nero later in Book 14, when certain intriguers convince Nero that Seneca should be removed in order to mark the end of his boyhood and his maturation into a *iuvenis* (14.52.3–4):

> obiciebant etiam eloquentiae laudem uni sibi adsciscere et carmina crebrius factitare, postquam Neroni amor eorum venisset. nam oblectamentis principis palam iniquum detrectare vim eius equos regentis, inludere vocem, quotiens caneret. quem ad finem nihil in re publica clarum fore, quod non ab illo reperiri credatur? certe finitam Neronis pueritiam et robur iuventae adesse: exueret magistrum, satis amplis doctoribus instructus maioribus suis.

Tacitus explicitly frames this rite of passage as a competition of, and about, words. The charge against Seneca—albeit in reported speech and presumably hyperbolic—can be tantalizingly interpreted as suggesting that the eloquence and poetry he so covets are equal to "everything in the Republic." In response, Seneca requests an audience in the hope of convincing Nero to let him withdraw quietly from public life. Even as the stage is set for Seneca's dialogic defeat and removal, Nero admits the debt he owes him as a speaker: *quod meditatae orationi tuae statim occurram, id primum tui muneris habeo* (14.55.1). Seneca is thus figured as the ultimate *auctor* of all the *eloquentia* deployed in the ensuing confrontation, and the *laus* for such eloquence made the prize. Nero's defeat of Seneca (and thus his transition from boy to man) will rest upon a superior wielding of rhetoric—arguably Seneca's own.

This same struggle drives the action of the *Octavia*, and reaches a similar climax in a confrontation between Seneca and Nero directly following the account of Agrippina's death. The problem of Nero's authority is even expressed in similar terms through the deployment of the juristic term *sui iuris*, traditionally used to describe the status of an independent legal subject in the Roman world; that is, a free male adult.[29] It first appears

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[28] *Ann.* 14.11.3. Quintilian preserves a *sententia* from the letter, which he, too, attributes to Seneca's hand (8.5.18).

[29] See Justinian, *Inst.* 1.8.

at the close of Octavia's opening monologue, wherein we might expect programmatic ideas to be expressed (28–30 *cuique Britanni terga dedere | ducibus nostris ante ignoti | iurisque sui*). Here it is being used explicitly in connection with slavery, and speaks to her personal recognition that she exists in a state of *alieni iuris* (31–33 *coniugis, heu me, pater, insidiis | oppresse iaces servitque domus | cum prole tua capta tyranno*). Seneca reintroduces the term at the outset of Act Two, claiming to have enjoyed being *sui iuris* while holed up on Corsica (383), redeploying the vocabulary into the semantic atmosphere of the ensuing dialogue. Seneca attempts to dissuade Nero from executing the exiles Plautus and Sulla, and from divorcing Octavia in favor of Poppaea. In the confrontation itself, we witness the repeated opposition of Nero's identity as *pater patriae* with his failure to assume the role of a biological *pater*, and thus pass fully into manhood.[30] Yet Nero defeats (or at least stalemates)[31] Seneca in an exchange of *exempla* and *sententiae*, and thus surpasses Seneca not just as a surrogate father, but, as we shall see, as a philosopher and playwright. The executions and divorce swiftly follow. This in itself offers another suggestive structural parallel, since the beheadings of Plautus and Sulla and the divorce of the Octavia are the first acts of Nero following the confrontation in Book 14 of the *Annals*. Ferri has noted that it is a curiosity that the execution of Plautus and Sulla figures as the significant, if not precipitating, event directly before the divorce in both accounts, though he once more suggests a common source.[32]

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[30] 444 *patriae patri*. Cognates: 478 *patriae … parens*; 489–491 *electus orbem spiritu sacro regis | patriae parens. quod nomen ut serves petit | suosque cives Roma commendat tibi.*

[31] The question of who 'wins' is still up for debate. Opinions vary: Seneca's performance has been characterized as everything from "wise and courageous" (Habinek (2000) 265) to "tired" (Boyle (2008) lxviii), but is usually understood to be rendered ineffectual in the face of Nero's pragmatism or naked power (e.g. Goldberg (2003) 23) and has even been characterized as critical of Senecan philosophy in general (Harrison (2003) 121). Wilson (2003c) 86–87, however, argues that "the moral firepower of his rhetoric of virtue" has thus far been underestimated.

[32] Here I think the "chronological problem" identified by Goldberg (2003) 24 n. 24, Wilson (2003c) 85, and Billot (2003) 131 is otherwise irrelevant. Simply stated, the apparent inconsistency arises from the fact that, in Tacitus, Seneca is shown already to have left court before Nero begins divorce proceedings against Octavia, thus the *Octavia*'s debate could supposedly never have happened. This displays the immediate inclination on the part of all three scholars—even Billot—towards trusting Tacitus as purveyor of the 'accurate' account, against which the *Octavia* is to be checked. When or if the confrontation occurred is of little interest to the present discussion; what matters is that it appears in both accounts, in a similar place within the narrative sequence.

These thematic and structural affinities are complemented by the fact that much of the dialogue for this confrontation is drawn from within the Senecan corpus; just as was implied in the *Annals*, here both characters quite literally speak with Seneca's words.[33] The sustained allusion to Senecan literature renders this a conflict between Seneca and proto-Seneca, conducted through his words, and demonstrating his defeat in the same terms.

This common competition in inherited eloquence and its pedagogical background are brought into particular relief in the *Octavia* by material borrowed from Seneca's *De Clementia*.[34] The choice of this text not only serves the theme of the debate, but, since it was dedicated by Seneca to Nero in his role as *praeceptor* (*Clem.* 1.1.1), it also evokes immediately the particular relationship between the characters that is evolved throughout Books 13 and 14 of the *Annals*.[35] The arrival of this material in the *Octavia* is heralded by Seneca's line at 442, where he states that "clemency is a great remedy for fear" (*magnum timoris remedium clementia est*). He proceeds to extol the value of "consensus" with the people at 460 and 485, reflecting *De Clementia* 1.3.4. Nero opposes consensus with fear of the king (457–459, discussed below; 493–494 *quodque ab invitis | preces humilesque voces exprimit nostri metus*), which is addressed in the *De Clementia* at 1.12.4.

Here the allusive language only grows thicker, since it is precisely at this point in the *De Clementia* that Seneca decries the infamous "let them hate me, so long as they fear me" (*oderint, dum metuant*) *sententia* from Accius' *Atreus*. This dramatic and storied maxim regarding the power of tyrants is echoed in both Seneca's *Thyestes* and the *Octavia*, where Nero declares "it is necessary that they should fear … and that they should obey my orders" (458–459).[36] The balanced jussives of Nero's closing sentiment in the *Octavia*'s debate (589 *liceat facere quod Seneca improbat*) resonate in the same fashion, acknowledging at once Seneca's

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[33] For systematic surveys and argumentative treatments of the *Octavia*'s allusions, see the commentaries of Ferri (2003b) and Boyle (2008). Also Ferri (2003a), esp. 91–95; Goldberg (2003) 23 for some discussion on the *Consolatio ad Helviam* and *De Clementia*; Manuwald (2003) for particular resonance with the *Thyestes*.

[34] See Wilson (2003c) 81 n. 39 for bibliography on the *Octavia* author's "well established" familiarity with the *De Clementia*.

[35] Syme (1958) 336 has even suggested that Tacitus imagined Nero actually reciting this text in the matter of Plautius Lateranus (*Ann.* 13.11.2, discussed above, p. 212).

[36] *Thy.* 206–207 (*facta domini cogitur populus sui | tam ferre quam laudare*) and 212 (*quod nolunt velint*). The latter is characterized by Boyle (2008) as an "Accian outburst." Champlin (2003a) 307–308 supports the allusion in the *Octavia*.

reproof as both actor (in the *Octavia*) and *auctor* (in the *De Clementia*), and thus placing a final signpost to the allusive game that preceded it. Tacitus attributes a similar *sententia*—likely also modeled on the Accian maxim—to Agrippina in Book 14 the *Annals*, where she is said to have once expressed the modified sentiment "let him kill me, so long as he should rule" (14.9.3 *occidat … dum imperet*).

These particular echoes in the *Octavia* are part of a more general scheme to assimilate Nero to the figure of Atreus, accomplished through generous borrowing from the confrontation between Atreus and his Satelles in Seneca's *Thyestes*.[37] This systematic allusion is invoked when Nero describes himself as both *inertis* (453) and *inultus* (463), adjectives which Atreus likewise uses upon his first entrance in the *Thyestes* (176–178 *Ignave, iners, enervis et (quod maximum | probrum tyranno rebus in summis reor) | inulte*). The references to the *Thyestes* locate Seneca and Nero within a familiar debate, tinge their characters with the loaded presence of Atreus and the Satelles, and, most interestingly, confine Seneca (the character) within a staged debate of his own (the author's) creation. By doing so, the *Octavia* demonstrates quite explicitly how such allusion can be productive in the composition of an historical account; that is, how analogy, both mythical and textual, can be used to evoke deeper meaning to events either related or represented. It is with reference to such compositional technique that Joseph A. Smith characterizes the *Octavia* as "an interpretative response to Senecan drama," one that "saw in Seneca's mythological plots a reflection of the socio-political climate of the later Julio-Claudian dynasty."[38] He argues that the playwright recognized that Seneca dramatized the political preoccupations of an age, and that this practice rendered in his tragedies a rich vein of useful language, structures and *exempla* for dramatizing the Imperial court. In the *Thyestes* he found both a politically relevant debate on the logistics of monarchic rule (the currency of which was supported by the *De Clementia*) and a ready model for the uneven relationship of power between a tyrant and his attendant. It is conceivable that these were based on Seneca's own experiences, and they were certainly productive for dramatizing them.

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[37] For Nero's characterization as Atreus, see Champlin (2003a). The allusion to *Thyestes* is discussed by Boyle (2008) lxx, and in particular depth by Manuwald (2003), who productively complicates Calder's reading (see note 38 below).

[38] Smith (2003) 396. See also Calder (1983) 193–195, who termed it the "earliest commentary on the *Thyestes*."

A similar effect of characterization is achieved in the *Octavia* by the adaptation of language from Seneca's *Phaedra*, specifically in the exegeses made by both Seneca and Phaedra's Nutrix on the fictive nature of the god Amor: ***Volucrem esse Amorem fingit*** *immitem deum* | *Mortalis error* (*Oct.* 557–558); ***Deum esse amorem*** *turpis et vitio fauens* | *finxit libido* (*Phae.* 195–196). Furthermore, the image of Amor is characterized in much the same way by both speakers—*armat et telis manus* | *arcuque sacras, instruit saeva face* by Seneca (558–559); *proterva tenera tela molitur manu* by the Nutrix (200)—and, in their subsequent explanation for the invention of this deity, each expresses it as the indulgent vice of those blessed with good fortune (Seneca: *luxu otio* | *nutritur inter laeta Fortunae bona* (562); Nutrix: *Quisquis secundis rebus exultat nimis* | *fluitque luxu, semper insolita appetit.* | *tunc illa magnae dira fortunae comes* | *subit libido* (204–207); cf. Tac. *Ann.* 14.22.6: Nero's *luxus cupido*).[39] Here the *Octavia*'s use of the word *nutritur* signposts the allusion rather strongly, referring back to the Senecan character whose sentiments it borrows. As with Atreus, the analogy is quite fruitful: we are invited to consider Seneca in the role of a Nutrix, who (while ultimately subordinate) holds a peculiar position of cognitive power over a child he had a hand in raising—the kind of power defined under *alieni iuris*, and implied in Tacitus through his role as *praeceptor* and *magister*.[40] The allusions to the *Phaedra* thus contribute to the general themes of Nero's confrontation with Seneca in the *Octavia*, while at the same time enhancing the significance of the moment where Nero—like Phaedra—asserts the authority of his social status over Seneca, and thus assumes his full majority. Once more, the playwright of the *Octavia* uses Seneca's own work to broaden our understanding of the conflict between the two characters.

With all this in mind, Nero's claim in the *Annals* that he is indebted to Seneca for his ability to respond to him perhaps merits deeper consideration, especially since we have indeed seen his dramatic counterpart make use of great reservoirs of *aliena facundia* in the *Octavia*'s staging of their confrontation. Indeed, we might say that the *Annals* records what the *Octavia* enacts, since, as we have seen, the *Octavia* makes deliberate use of its Senecan predecessors to highlight the very themes which are at stake in Book 14 of Tacitus' *Annals*—namely, Nero's progression from boy to man/emperor by exerting power over the spoken word. Tacitus' Seneca

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[39] Nero's response to Seneca also echoes that of Phaedra to her Nutrix (*Oct.* 566 *Hanc esse vitae maximam causam reor*; *Phaed.* 218 *Amoris in me maximum regnum reor*).

[40] Also observed by Harrison (2003) 117–121.

and Nero might even be borrowing their *facundia* from their counterparts in the *Octavia*, since in both texts the character of Seneca places the *exemplum* of Augustus in the center of the debate. In the *Octavia* he follows his own *De Clementia* in citing Augustus as a great example of the benefits a ruler may gain through clemency (*Oct.* 472–491, after *De Clem.* 1.9.1–11.3); in the *Annals* he reminds Nero that Augustus allowed even Agrippa and Maecenas to retire, as Seneca himself now wishes to do (14.53.3). Although Augustus is thus used to illustrate quite different ideas, in both the *Octavia* and the *Annals* the actual operation of his *exemplum* is exactly the same: he is deployed as a rhetorical example coordinated with the terms of their respective debate. Moreover, in both texts, Nero's victory is based in large part on his ability to refute this *exemplum* point for point (*Ann.* 14.55.2–3; *Oct.* 504–529). If Tacitus can be thus be understood to be basing his version on that of the *Octavia*—in a form of *imitatio cum variatione*—his re-orientation of the Augustus example may be directed at rendering the debate even more specious, and thus further exposing the empty theatricality of this interaction.

This last possibility is supported by the vain show of love and gratitude made by Nero and Seneca following their exchange in the *Annals*, which Tacitus asserts—sententiously—is how all conversations with the dominant end (14.56.3):

> his adicit complexum et oscula, factus natura et consuetudine exercitus[41] velare odium fallacibus blanditiis. Seneca, qui finis omnium cum dominante sermonum, gratis agit.

The practiced operation of *velare* obviously speaks to how theater has become the new reality of Rome—as Nero plays the role of the *civilis princeps* and Seneca responds according to the script—but, more significantly, Seneca's climactic confrontation with Nero is also recast by their mutual performance of social roles as just one more stage exchange between *satelles* and tyrant. Tacitus thus builds upon the technique employed in the *Octavia*, which uses material from the *Thyestes* and *Phaedra* to render its Seneca/Nero confrontation generic, familiar, and ultimately futile, presenting the audience with a confrontation that has already been staged repeatedly in such plays.[42] The effect in the *Annals* is only deep-

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[41] See Santoro L'Hoir (2006) 154–155 for a discussion of the particular significance of the participle *exercitus* in this passage. In that it also suggests training and development, it also complements the theme of Nero's maturation (see n. 26 above).

[42] As Harrison (2003) 121 puts it, "Seneca's line of half-hearted argumentation indicates that Seneca is going through the motions, realizing he has lost the *agon* before it has

ened by the fact that this confrontation has quite literally been staged before—in the *Octavia*. Thus Tacitus comments both on the political theater of tyranny and the reality it conceals, as he shows how even so exceptional a character as Seneca is reduced to the status of any other satellite within the orbit of his master.

It is important to note that Tacitus presumably did not have to relate this episode as he does; the witnesses to it would have been few, if any, and he should have been reasonably free to invent the speeches as he saw fit. Certainly he shares this opportunity for invention with the dramatist of the *Octavia*, although the fact that his version bears such strong similarities to the play suggests that he perhaps felt constrained in some way by the pattern of the debate as set forth in it. Of course, this alone does not rule out a common source placing limits on the both of them, but, as we have seen, the similarities extend beyond their content to the techniques employed in giving it meaning. To the extent that Tacitus uses any Senecan material to pass comment on the events he records, he is engaging in precisely the same activity which Smith identified at work within the *Octavia*, and which can be amply demonstrated with reference to the *De Clementia*, *Thyestes*, and *Phaedra*. The force of such systematic allusion can only be magnified if we allow that Tacitus is canvassing not just Seneca's allegorical drama for his description of Julio-Claudian Rome, but a specific play that has already condensed much of this and put it on display.

While it is worth emphasizing how well Smith's analysis of the *Octavia* fits Tacitus' *Annals*, this is of course because his argument bears such strong similarities to the scholarship specific to the historian. Charles Segal defines the "dramatic element" of Tacitus—the ingredient his history shares with poetry—as the thematic connection he lends to events, which recreates the mood surrounding them and thus delivers to his readers a sense of participation in them.[43] It is precisely this effect that is demonstrated in Denis Feeney's concise analysis of *Annals* 15.39.3, where Nero recites the fall of Troy during the great fire of Rome, "making present evils look like disasters of the past." Feeney argues that "this is a highly self-referential moment" that signposts Tacitus' use of Virgil's fall of Troy in describing the fire, so as to impress upon the reader how "Roman forward progress . . . is always being blocked by an endless

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started." See also Champlin (2003a) 307 for how the reformatted incarnation of *oderint dum metuant* put in Nero's mouth in the *Octavia* "smacks of the stage tyrant."

[43] Segal (1973) esp. 122.

return to prototypical mythic patterns."[44] This episode belongs to what Woodman has characterized as Tacitus' paradoxographical element: the inclusion of events that traditionally belong more to *fabula* than to *historia*, which he suggests are intended to communicate a proper appreciation of Nero's outlandish behavior precisely by exploiting their confusion of genre.[45] Such an interpretative mode complements the broader program of play-acting, illusion, and theater at work in the *Annals*, and together they offer an experience of a Roman life that was not just tragic or theatrical, but also fundamentally spectacular and surreal.[46]

Of course, Tacitus' interpretation at 15.39.3 also perfectly describes Seneca's game in his tragedies: casting the evils of the Julio-Claudian reality in terms of the disasters of a mythic tradition. Tacitus thus betrays, if not a definite awareness, then at least a faculty capable of analyzing Seneca's compositional project, and at the same time by analogy shows Nero fully taking on the role of Seneca *auctor*, just prior to the latter's own theatrical death at 15.62–64.[47] Tacitus, then, is fully capable of knowingly adopting the particular interpretative frame at work in the *Octavia*, one signposted there by the deliberate artificiality of having Seneca appear and recite his own poetry and prose.[48]

Earlier in this chapter, I expressed surprise at Wiseman's reluctance to count the *Octavia* amongst Tacitus' sources, especially since he has written so extensively on the power of drama for creating a historical canon.[49] Likewise, his fellow skeptic Kragelund felt more comfortable speculating that a lost drama concerning L. Cornelius Balbus' career could have been a model for Velleius Paterculus (from which he adopted his "hostile" tone) than allowing for a tradition operating from the play we actu-

[44] Feeney (2007) 106–107, with his translation of *praesentia mala vetustis cladibus adsimulantem*.

[45] Woodman (1998d), esp. 187–188. Cited by Feeney as part of his analysis.

[46] And thus particularly suited to poetry (Quint. 2.4.2). For more on the dissolution of the distinction between reality and illusion under the reign of Nero, see Boyle (2008) xxi and Erasmo (2004) 118.

[47] Such an awareness is also suggested by his handling of Curiatius Maternus in the *Dialogus*, for a brief discussion of which see Tarrant (1995) 226–227. For the theatricality of Seneca's death, see Woodman (1998a) 206 and n. 53.

[48] As Goldberg (2003) 23 notes, his entrance is "unprepared and unannounced," and at first he is to be identified only by his paraphrases of the Senecan corpus; presumably this must have been quite obvious. He also notes it was the studied artificiality of this scene which first prompted the 14th-century statesman Coluccio Salutati to question the authorship of the *Octavia* (14–15).

[49] E.g. Wiseman (1995) 138–143.

ally have to the *Annals*.[50] It is just such an effect, however, that Champlin has accused the *Octavia* of having on the subsequent historiographical tradition, whose influential anti-Neronian bias his monograph on the emperor seeks to correct.[51] Regardless of whether the *Octavia* is intended to condemn Nero as a stage tyrant (or to repudiate public criticism of Seneca, or to allegorize the turning of Fortune, etc.),[52] to the extent that it accomplishes any such effect at all as "a dramatization of historical events" (as Wilson perhaps too casually describes it),[53] how is it, in compositional terms, any different from the *Annals* of Tacitus, or, indeed, any other work of narrative history? As Holly Haynes argues, any attempt to narrativize history involves the selection and organizing of data in order to make some kind of sense of it—what Wiseman has called the addition of *aphēgēsis*.[54] The *Octavia*, as a representation of history, is restricted by such data just as any more 'scientific' account of the same events would be (as both Goldberg and Wilson note), and where it differs from them it can as easily be accounted a matter of what Billot calls "authorial spin" and Wiseman "tendentiousness," rather than just methodological deficiency on the author's part; such differences can be born precisely at the intersection between enquiry and *aphēgēsis*. This is why Billot is very much correct to characterize the *Octavia* as an "historical interpretation," and doubly so when she suggests that as such it exists to be contested (or not) by Tacitus, who in his divergences writes the "revisionist" account.[55]

Considering the texts thus, in terms of their *aphēgēsis*, helps make sense of the complementary mixture of poetic, historiographical, and even oratorical techniques they present, which I believe offer more similarities than differences.[56] Both Tacitus and the author of the *Octavia* engage in the same project—writing (a) Seneca—and utilize similar

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[50] Kragelund (2002) 29–31.

[51] Champlin (2003b) 9, though see also Champlin (2003a) 313 for an evaluation of Nero's complicity in at least certain aspects of his posthumous characterization. Chaumartin (2002) 60 similarly places the *Octavia* in an anti-Neronian tradition.

[52] With reference to Whitman (1976) and Wilson (2003c), respectively.

[53] Wilson (2003c) 79.

[54] Haynes (2003) esp. 33–34; Wiseman (1993) 136.

[55] Goldberg (2003) 25 n. 25; Wilson (2003c) 69; Billot (2003) 140; Wiseman (1993) 126; Billot (2003) 141.

[56] Quite apart from their use of rhetorical *exempla*, both iterations of the Seneca/Nero confrontation could also be considered examples of declamation. Woodman (1988) 100 unites all three genres—historiography, poetry, and oratory—under the umbrella of rhetoric, as "types of activity aimed to elaborate certain data in such a way as to affect or persuade an audience or readership."

methods and conceits to convey information to their audience. As Smith observed, the *Octavia*'s playwright recognized in Senecan drama a ready supply of language and paradigms for analyzing the Julio-Claudian *domus*. Seneca had created a world of dramatic allegory for the imperial court; the *Octavia*'s author unpacked the allegory and made it more explicit. Whether or not Tacitus inherited this hermeneutics of tragic metaphor directly from the *Octavia*, it is certainly at work in his own account of Seneca's time. Even if the reader will not accept that elements in *Annals* 14.3–8 and 14.53–56 are based on the similar scenes in the *Octavia*, the latter should at least present itself as a useful, contemporary paradigm for what Wilson termed Tacitus' "compositional technique," and be able to offer the same kind of benefit for understanding the historian that it has been shown to have for Seneca.

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